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The Week

IF THE coming world conference on disarmament were not tarred with the brush of the League, there could be no question but that America would both participate and play a leading rôle. The enterprise is not only one which under ordinary circumstances we should be proud to think of as "typically American," it fulfills, and more than fulfills, an ambition which President Coolidge himself has several times expressed with the approval of the nation. Moreover, the signing of the Locarno Pact for the first time gives a reasonable chance of success for the effort. It is true that America is not directly concerned with the problem of European land armament; but we are very much concerned with the future welfare of the European nations, which is bound up with the question of war and peace. Moreover, the less we are directly involved, the more useful we can be in reconciling the demands of others. Participation in the conference of course in no way implicates us with the League itself, or binds us to accept the limitations suggested if we do not wish to. This is true of the actual conference and even more so of the preliminary session for planning the agenda, the only one to which we have as yet been formally invited.

WE believe these facts are clear to all sensible men and we therefore hope that the press is wrong when it reports President Coolidge as being still in fear of possible objection by the irreconcilables. We trust he will not, as a sop to them, make our participation unofficial, or have us represented merely by diplomats already abroad or army and navy officers. No members of the diplomatic staff, however able, are in a position to play the part which the American representatives can and should play. As for army and navy officers, the experience of the Washington Conference in 1921 showed that, however well meaning, they are temperamentally and by training incapable of doing anything in a conference for the limitation of armament save to obstruct its course. No other enterprise in which this country is likely to participate in the next few months can be one-half so important; and there is no reason to send to it less than the strongest nonpartisan civilian delegation we can muster.

THE long debate in the Senate over American participation in the World Court has opened with its supporters showing a commendable candor. We hope its opponents will follow the same course, and will not hide their destructive purpose behind a cloud of reservations deliberately planned to be unacceptable. The friends of the Court have admitted frankly that it is connected with the League of Nations. They deny, and we think properly so, that the existing relationship is one which will vitiate the work of the Court, permit political pressure to be exerted, or in any way embroil the United States in League affairs. They maintain that the Harding-Hughes reservations are ample to protect our sovereignty, and that it would be folly to demand of the other nations a drastic alteration in the plan of the Court for the sake of securing American adhesion immediately rather than a few years hence when the irreconcilables may be out of power, or have changed their views. These arguments seem to us

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sound; and we believe that unless by violent misrepresentation of the facts the country is thrown into an unjustifiable panic, there is every likelihood that a two-thirds majority of the Senate will vote for our entrance during the present session.

FINANCE ministers and fiscal plans tumble over each other so rapidly in France that there is hardly time to assess the promise of one before another follows. Yet evidence accumulates that neither in France nor America is it sufficiently appreciated that there is no way of stopping French inflation short of bringing about a real balance of the budget through increased current receipts or decreased current expenses or both. More borrowing, whether internal or external, whatever the security, will merely aggravate the disease. The plan of the northern industrials, for instance, to raise for the government 10,000,000,000 francs in the United States by pledging their assets is literally worse than useless. Such a loan would merely increase the government's obligations to pay without increasing its current income. If the industrials object to paying taxes enough to cover the government's present obligations, how will they like paying the interest on 10,000,000,000 more? Even so good a financial critic as Senator Smoot seems to cherish the delusion that France can pay us what she already owes if only we lend her enough in addition. A further loan might be justified to assist stabilization of the currency, once the budget had been firmly balanced —as in the case of Germany—but the loan of one cent to France before a real budgetary balance had been assured would be an injury to both parties.

PASSAGE of the administration tax bill virtually unaltered by a tremendous majority in the House of Representatives finally brings the Mellon plan of "tax reform" by untaxing the rich to the last stage short of fulfillment. It is a triumph of political control by an economically powerful minority of the population. Through supreme skill in the use of propaganda, in the management of party machinery and of a national election, and finally in the reorganization and discipline of the House itself, the ways have been greased for this pet measure of those with large incomes. So overwhelming is the victory that no effective criticism of the bill was expressed even by the "opposition" party, a majority of the Democrats having jumped on the bandwagon. The Senate still retains a vestige of independence, and opposition is threatened there. But if rumor is correct, the Democratic Senators will furnish a form of opposition which can only make a bad matter worse. They apparently do not oppose reduction of surtaxes, or reduction of tax yield, or slower retirement of the national debt—the chief faults of the House bill. Rather, they want more reduction in the lower brackets, a still smaller yield, and a still slower retirement of the national debt. Thus, by giving to taxpayers a relief unnecessary now, they would increase the long-run tax burden on this generation for payment of the war debt, and would indefinitely postpone the ability of the government to incur additional expenditures for any other purpose. They would be lucky, indeed, if they did not create a deficit and thus bring about in the near future an alternative between inflation and higher taxes again.

SENATOR JAMES J. WALKER, New York City's new Mayor, has made the statement that one of the major problems to which he will give his attention is city planning. The promise does him credit; no municipal question is more pressing, and most of all in New York. There geographical limitations plus the erection of skyscrapers have produced conditions where traffic congestion is already almost unendurable, and rapidly growing worse. It is impossible to ascertain the amount of money lost in moving goods through crowded streets, in needless transshipments, and in the payment of huge rents based in turn upon ground values augmented by pressure of population; but such losses are undoubtedly vast. To them must be added the personal factor: the difficulty and discomfort for the individual who is compelled to fight his way into the subway morning and evening, the increased cost of living, the impossibility of creating satisfactory housing at reasonable prices. If an engineer were permitted to "play God" and make over New York for the sole purpose of serving the needs of its population as well as possible, he would undoubtedly declare the skyscraper a curse, forbid the erection of more, raze some of those already standing, and fix a limit on the number of persons allowed to live or work in any square mile, a limit decidedly below that now reached in some quarters. Mr. Walker, of course, cannot operate in any such ruthless fashion; the enormous superstructure of realty values of many billions erected in New York upon the existing condition of congestion would make impossible any drastic action even if he wished to take it. The most he can do will be to set in motion forces which will work over many years toward decentralization and the creation of satellite centers around the rim of the urban area. If he can do so much, he will have performed a service greater than that of any other man who has held his office in a generation.

STRIKING confirmation of the New Republic's warning that the building boom is approaching its end was received at a recent meeting of the industry in New York, when Mr. Walter Stabler of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company and other representatives of great loaning institutions gave the most positive assurances, supported by statistical studies, that there was a large and increasing number of vacancies in business buildings and high class apartments and that rents have started on a downward course. Even if the conclusions were not true, such an attitude on the part of responsible finan-

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ciers would lead to a curtailment of new projects. But they are true. It was furthermore shown that speculative builders in their scramble for profits had encouraged all sorts of dishonest practices—graft, stealing of materials, use of materials not up to specification, alarming reduction of quality, issuance of bonds far above the margin of safety and on the basis of grossly exaggerated values. All this assumes an importance beyond the threatened loss to investors when we remember that the building boom has been one of the chief props under our general prosperity and that its collapse may start in motion the cycle of depression. And the significance becomes tragic indeed in view of the fact that while the speculative régime has thus been permitted to play fast and loose with its opportunities, the scarcity of good housing for the lower income groups has remained as severe as ever, because the profit to be made in it is either non-existent or too negligible to attract the efforts of practical business men. Thus once again is illustrated the virtue of private enterprise and free competition.

SEVERAL conclusions are strengthened by the whole sad story of building. One is the desirability of good standards and specifications, with adequate testing of materials, brought out in the article by Mr. Chase and Mr. Schlink in this week's New Republic. Architects and builders now use but few specifications—cement being the outstanding exception—because there is no practical method of testing available to them. Another is the desirability of some form of industrial control in the interest of everyone which will apply the spur to a lagging industry and the brakes to an overspeeding one before dangerous shortages or surpluses are developed. Stabilization of the business cycle implies not unlimited competition, but industrial integration. More important still, however, is the need of public credit for housing designed for the lower income groups. Such housing is not supplied in times of depression by speculative builders, and it is not supplied in the most active boom. Credit is not available in either phase from private sources at low enough interest rates in large enough quantities. Now that the building industry is facing a period of slackened activity there is every reason why the movement for housing financed by public credit should be encouraged. The time is favorable also for the progress of sound city and regional planning.

THE League for Industrial Democracy celebrates this month its twentieth anniversary. Founded in 1905 as the Intercollegiate Socialist Society, it has had a notable part in arousing interest in social problems on the part of young men and women in colleges. A list of officers and members of the executive committee from its founding to the present recalls the names of early radicals such as Jack London, Upton Sinclair, Morris Hillquit, Owen R. Lovejoy, J. G. Phelps-Stokes. Other names which appear are those of Ernest Poole, Walter Lippmann, Juliet Poyntz, Vida D. Scudder, John Spargo, Charles Zueblin. The Intercollegiate Socialist Society existed for the purpose of interesting college men and women in the study of socialism. Four years ago it changed its name to the League for Industrial Democracy, and its purpose to more militant efforts for a new social order. Its work, still largely with college groups, is now in the active charge of three directors, Norman Thomas, Paul Blanshard and Harry W. Laidler. The twentieth anniversary dinner will be held at the Fifth Avenue Restaurant, December 30.

THE Board of Trustees of the College of the City of New York has confirmed the action of the faculty in retaining compulsory military training. They have done so although 2,000 students and 3,200 parents voted against it by six to one. The action of the Board seems to us both unfair and unwise. Military training in the colleges bears no practical relation to national preparedness. Our war experience proved this, when it was found that students who had had such courses were only able to enter the military training camps on an equality with other men. The only value of the training is "cultural"; and there is no more reason for forcing a student to take such work against his will than there is to exercise the same compulsion in regard to any other college course. Indeed, even the cultural value of military training as it is administered in the colleges is, in our judgment, open to grave question. Its purpose, as is shown by the extract from the official Manual of Military Training quoted in our issue of December 16, is to destroy "the principles of sportsmanship and consideration for your opponent." It is also to break down the impulse toward individual initiative, toward thinking for oneself, and to substitute a blind obedience to constituted authority even when the orders given are obviously wrong and stupid, and the result of obedience may be death. The ideal which animates the American military machine, like every other military machine, is precisely that Prussian autocracy to annihilate which we were supposed to have entered the War. In continuing to force all their students to go through the military sausage-grinder, the authorities of City Colloge have truckled to jingoism in a manner which we regret and they should be ashamed of.

THE sentence imposed on Colonel Mitchell is about what was to be expected. From the point of view of the army martinets, his campaign has never represented anything else than a horrendous violation of discipline; the world would come to an end, they felt sure, if he were not properly spanked, and spanked he has been. Nevertheless, the manner of the trial has been such as to leave a bad taste in the mouth. To call Colonel Mitchell lack-

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ing in patriotism, an "Aaron Burr," is a gross libel: he has deliberately thrown away a brilliant career for no other purpose than to seek to strengthen his country's military resources and reform their administration. The attitude of both army and navy officials has from the beginning been such as to suggest little desire to find out whether Mitchell is right or wrong, and a great desire to punish him for his "insubordination." By attacking him personally they have sought to weaken the effect of his allegations which they are unwilling or unable to disprove. We hope that Congress will feel itself as little satisfied as we are with the perfunctory attempts thus far made to get really to the bottom of the Mitchell charges.

WAR Department engineers, surveying the Tennessee River basin, have shown the possibility of hydro-electric power greater than that to be gained in the United States by the harnessing of Niagara. Its exploitation would create a great series of lakes and a navigable waterway to the Mississippi basin. With the valuable natural deposits in the region, an industrial development is possible rivalling the Ruhr in Germany, for dominance of which nations have sacrificed lives and treasure. We suppose that most Americans will greet this news by throwing their hats in the air and cheering on the usual pioncering scramble for profits. But here is a clear alternative which should be seriously considered. We have, as a nation, discovered a new source of common wealth, a way to increase comfort and happiness for millions. By foresight and control we can get the utmost common benefit out of it — well planned industrial centers, not too large, with good houses occupied by healthy and satisfied workers with a recognized function in industry, surrounded by prosperous farming regions in which the farmers would have the advantage of cheap power and good marketing facilities, the whole serving the needs of the rest of the nation. By letting private initiative seek the utmost profit we can have another Pittsburgh, with real estate speculation, overcrowded and inferior housing, a suppressed industrial population, a declining agriculture, all paying tribute to the feudal lords of industry. In the result twenty years hence will the vision and capacity of those now in power be weighed.

MEMBERS of the League of Catholic Women of Detroit have taken an action of which they and their church ought to be heartily ashamed, in asking the Board of Regents of Michigan University to clap a muzzle on President C. C. Little. Doctor Little's appalling crime consists in publicly advocating birth control and the sterilization of the unfit. Since he is a noted biologist and eugenist, the chances are about a million to one that he knows more about the matter than ever so many ladies of Detroit. But were he wrong, he would still be entitled to parade his ignorance where and when he pleases. We are glad to note that the Board of Regents shares our view and recognizes a right which, though the Catholic Women of Detroit have evidently never heard of it, still exists—the right of free speech.

IN pardoning Benjamin Gitlow Governor Smith set an example to executives of other states where men are held in prison for acts in connection with the industrial struggle which the War gave the conservatives an opportunity to translate into crime. Gitlow is a Communist, with the singular lack of logic which characterizes our legal procedure he was convicted of criminal anarchy, in February 1920, and sentenced to imprisonment from five to ten years. Governor Smith's message follows the lines of that issued in connection with the pardon of Jim Larkin in January 1923. He points out that neither Larkin nor Gitlow advocated anarchy, "which is the absence of all organized government, but a new and radically different form of organized government." Governor Smith does not stand foursquare for freedom of speech. He states his belief that Gitlow, like Larkin, was properly and legally convicted for advocating revolutionary tactics, but he recognizes that the intermittent imprisonment which Gitlow has suffered during the last five years is sufficient punishment, for a crime of words. He is sensible enough to realize that a certain ritual of violence is as necessary to a militant social faith, as other sorts of ritual to other faiths. The gentle Communist often breathes out violence just as the Christian Rotarian does the Sermon on the Mount, and with no more serious intention of putting it into practice.

A DEVELOPMENT of first rate importance in American undergraduate life is that of the intercollegiate student conference. Hitherto these conferences have been largely confined to religious interest, arranged, directed and supervised by such organizations as the Y. M. C. A. Now students have discovered that they have other interests in common with those of other colleges and are calling conferences ad hoc to deal with them. During December two such meetings have been held. The most impressive was at Princeton on the subject of the entrance of the United States into the World Court, at which 250 institutions were represented. A few days before this at Wesleyan University a Parley on Education was held to which student and faculty representatives from other colleges were invited. The topic of the discussion, to which Presidents Meiklejohn and Goodnow, Professors James Harvey Robinson and Ben D. Wood contributed, was specifically the college as a place of intellectual life. Later in the month comes the International conference of Northwestern to illustrate again the wholesome tendency on the part of students to take this means of broadening and stimulating the interests of college life into their own direction.

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Our Ostrich Debt Policy

SECRETARY KELLOGG'S allusion to the international financial policy of the United States in his recent New York address furnishes the occasion for an estimate of whither that policy is leading. He stated that cancellation of war debts was impossible and would be of no advantage either to debtor or creditor. He stated that the capacity of the debtor to pay had been considered, so far as possible within the limits of time of payment and interest rates allowed by Congress. He stated that the government was exercising an informal and voluntary oversight over private loans abroad, refusing to pass on their business merits but merely saying that certain loans were not in the public interest "such as loans for armaments, loans to countries not making debt settlements with the United States, or loans for monopolistic purposes." How honestly is this policy being carried out, and how adequate is it?

Answers to these questions are of supreme importance. Finance doubtless seems unreal to most people, as remote as it is abstruse, but it is the very nervous system of the world capitalist organism. A government in debt must tax or repudiate; a nation in debt must export or defraud; an industry in debt must produce or fail. Disorders of currency, taxation, production and consumption arising from financial confusion decide the fate of forms of government, disturb international comity, and stalk like ghosts beside every workman's table. To understand the main currents of finance is the prime necessity for those who wish to influence the future.

Our dealings with Italy furnish the most recent test of the administration's policy. We have made a debt "settlement" with Mussolini's government. This settlement provides for very small manageable payments in the present, and for very large and impossible payments in the latter half of the century. Those who negotiated the agreement cannot have expected it to be carried out. No government could bind its people to pay huge sums at the end of sixty years, no government can accept such a pledge from another with any confidence in its validity. It is understood among the informed that the pact must be revised long before the large payments come due. What, then, was the motive for the settlement? Mussolini's government wants, not to pay, but to borrow more money. Italian industry, hampered by a high interest rate incidental to stabilizing the lira, wants liquid capital at less cost. Italian banks, with large frozen credits, want foreign source of credit opened to them. Our negotiators want to present a settlement to Congress and an example to the the recalcitrant French. They want this settlement—however lacking in reality—to correspond technically with the demand of Congress for a certain interest rate. They want to facilitate the lending of money to Italy by the bankers who want to handle the loans. Result—Italy pays us $5,000,000 cash and some worthless promises; we pay her $100,000,000 in a new loan.

This exchange is a dishonest and dangerous expedient, ultimately damaging to both nations. It adds to the obligations of a country which already has assumed obligations impossible to pay. It marks the weakening of the most praiseworthy achievement of the Fascist dictatorship—the stoppage of inflation through the cessation of borrowing. It extends American credit on a risk high both economically and politically. It renders immediate assistance to the most obnoxious tyranny, the most jingoistic nationalism in the world, and gives American investors a stake in its perpetuation. It fastens a legal bond on future generations of Italian workers, which at whatever sacrifice of wages or access of toil they cannot possibly fulfill, and which may be used to the discredit of any post-Fascist government which our administration or bankers may not favor. The present Congress can do no greater service to humanity than to expose and repudiate this sinister arrangement.

We greatly prefer the failure of debt negotiations with the French to any such arrangement as the Italian. Nevertheless the American policy leading to this failure has potentialities of as much trouble. Apparently we are ready to negotiate the same sort of unrealistic agreement in this case. Any governmental examination of French capacity to pay which may have been made ignores the realities of the situation—the lack of a French budgetary surplus out of which payment may be appropriated; the crushing burden of the budget deficit, which already threatens the stability of the Republic; the uncertain size of any possible French export surplus under normal conditions such as would make transfer possible; the danger to both nations of extending further loans on the basis of a formal but deceptive settlement. The New Republic did not favor cancelling the French debt on the sentimental grounds of a balancing of war sacrifices and benefits, or as a means of enabling France to continue a disturber of the peace of Europe. But an effort to collect the last cent from a France which has gone to Locarno, which is struggling to preserve representative government, and in which any government in order to pay must impose unwonted sacrifice on a working population and a peasantry with a standard of living already below our own, does not seem to us a desirable American policy.

In the cases of Italy and France the early acts of the debt tragedy are still being performed; in the case of Germany we have reached a later one. Through the Dawes settlement German currency has been stabilized and the budget shows a balance. The channels of payment from the government and from industry to the Reparation Agent have been laid out. The government remains republican and relatively stable. The official assumption is therefore that reparations will be forthcoming. On the basis of restored stability a flood of external loans

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has been extended to German government and industry within the last year. Those recorded to date total about $525,000,000; it is estimated that those unrecorded total $400,000,000 more. The lion's share of these loans originate in the United States. The world has thus added a principal of nearly a billion dollars, at high rates of interest, to the burden of payments from Germany which are already expected by way of reparations.

But external payments cannot be made unless Germany exports more than she imports. Before the War she imported more than she exported. She was enabled to do this because of her own foreign investments—which have now almost vanished—and the fact that she was enabled to do it safeguarded a reasonable standard of living for her workers and a surplus for the development of her industry. During the past year her import excess has been approximately three times as large as it was before the War. This arose from the flood of foreign loans. It has helped develop her industry, but in spite of it the real wages of her workers have remained appreciably below the pre-war level. And because of it no net payments either of reparations or of interest or principal on the loans have been transferred outside of Germany.

As long as we continue lending more to Germany every year than we receive from her in reparations or interest, we can maintain this state of affairs. That is, we can subsidize the payments which Germany is supposed to make to us, and we can in addition subsidize her internal life. But obviously that is an impermanent state of affairs. Some day in the not distant future we shall expect a turn of the tide. New loans will subside; Germany will be expected to pay both governmental and private creditors. What then? It may be that she can develop a sufficient internal surplus to pay. It is highly doubtful whether she can make enough exportable goods or find enough markets for them to transfer the payment. In so far as she does so, she must impose a lower standard of living on her own population and make impossible the use of any surplus for internal social advancement. We shall be trying to collect either what is impossible to collect, or what the Germans can spare much less easily than we.

The "we" is used advisedly. Though the bulk of the immediate reparation payments go to France, Belgium and England, France is being asked to pay, and Belgium and England have already agreed to pay, at least as much to us as they will ever receive from Germany. That, if nothing else, makes the utmost possible pressure on Germany inevitable.

A foretaste of the possible international result was furnished the other day in the French Chamber of Deputies. The Communists are a bitterly hated section of that body. Yet when Cachin, the Communist leader, made a speech in which he attacked the economic imperialism of the United States and warned his countrymen against a financial thraldom to that nation more binding than any they had rendered to their own capitalists, he was applauded by virtually the whole Chamber. This happened before France had felt an ounce of the economic pressure we intend to exert if we can. Similar outcries have already come from Belgium.

In sum, the whole effort to collect the great reparations and debts from European nations which before the War had little or no exportable surplus means either an irritating and deceptive attempt to accomplish the impossible, or success in levying a tribute upon great populations which they can ill afford and will be sure to resent. We do not mean to imply that European industries do not now need our loans and should not, under proper circumstances, receive them. Indeed, the need for such loans doubly requires a thoroughgoing revision of our policy in attempting to validate the underlying war obligations, which were utterly unproductive, which unlike the new loans do not represent any development of ability to pay, and against which a whole capitalist economy will crack and strain until either they or something else breaks. It is high time for American opinion to hasten its inevitable reconsideration of this whole matter. We shall in later issues discuss in some detail what a desirable revision of policy would involve.

Challenging the Church

"The present task facing the church is nothing less than the revision of its entire procedure on an educational and experimental basis." From Prof. Harrison S. Elliott's Inaugural Address as the director of Religious Education in the Union Theological Seminary.

DURING the last days of December some twelve hundred students from the universities all over the country will assemble in Evanston, Illinois, for a purpose which may seem to the majority of clergymen somewhat impertinent. The students who have planned this gathering call it "queer" to hold conferences about a Christian solution of the problems of race, war and industry without examining the church as a possible instrument for the attainment of their cherished ends. They propose, consequently, on this occasion to question the church itself or in their own words to "evaluate" it as a "means towards the achievement of social ideals" and then to act on any "conclusions" which they may reach. It is an ambitious program which has its ironic aspects. The Christian Church is the most ancient and revered institution which still exists among the western peoples. Its literature, law, government and practices embody the wisdom which should have accrued from centuries of Christian labor. As the custodian of a sacred tradition, its most important function is to pass on to Christian neophytes the benefits of its special revelation and of its prolonged spiritual experience. Yet here is

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a group of students who, instead of sitting reverently at the feet of the ecclesiastical oracle, propose to hale the church itself into court and to ask how far it measures up to its own pretensions.

If the program seems impertinent or even irreverent, its authors can plead a plausible excuse. The Christian church is not performing its work in the society of today in a manner which gives satisfaction either to sympathetic outsiders or to candid insiders. Its record during the World War grieved its friends and disconcerted its leaders. Since the end of the war some of its more clear-sighted members have recognized its plight and sought remedies for its more obvious failures. They have worked in good faith to formulate social creeds for the different denominations and to provide agencies for the realization of the social Gospel. But as we look back over their well-meant efforts, it is clear that they have fallen almost flat. The social creeds were merely groups of guesses about possible ways in which the human ingredient in industry could receive more consideration. There was nothing authoritative about them. They must obtain reality, not as a faithful deduction from achieved Christian knowledge but as a result of a series of experimental tests conducted by business men, engineers and politicians. If the church was losing prestige because of its impotence to realize a social creed, it was necessary to push the inquiry further—to ask in public and without fear of the consequences what binds the church together, what part creeds play in its economy and why ardent Christians have always struggled vainly with the obligation to act with integrity on many of their most precious convictions. Yet necessary as it was to have these questions asked as if the answers were really doubtful, the leaders of the church have never braced themselves to undertake the work. The students have rushed in where the angels of the church have feared to tread.

The ministry are not ready to meet the tests which are implicitly set up by a thorough-going cross-examination. Troubled as many of them are about the way in which the church is doing its work, they realize that, if they were to raise fundamental questions and insist on candid answers, many of the churches would split and the discontented reforming minority might be forced to secede. The reformers are properly most reluctant to become just one more protestant sect. That part of the Christian body which understands the need of asking fundamental questions on the assumption that the answers are doubtful, is paralyzed by the sterility of mere protestantism and by uncertainty about the substitute for it. The others, of course, do not admit the existence of any serious predicament.

There is, consequently, no class of Christians who are willing, sword in hand, to cross-examine the churches in public except laymen; and among the laymen probably the only group who are free to undertake the job are young people with religious aspirations. Its performance requires a combination of flexibility, spiritual enterprise, innocence and ardor which one would seek in vain among business men, lawyers or college professors. The students are justified in not being deterred by the fear that in thus proposing to "evaluate" the holy Christian Church in a three-day conference, they may look impertinent and even ridiculous. The mere fact that they have undertaken the task proves them to possess qualifications for performing it which are lacking in most adults; and no matter how ridiculous they may look to some of their elders, they will not actually be ridiculous unless they take themselves too seriously and allow their sense of humor to be swallowed by their sense of responsibility.

The students need most of all to conduct their own enterprise in the same wary spirit which they propose to apply to the performances of the church. In questioning the church as it is they are implicitly including in the scope of their sceptical inquiry past attempts to reform the church. Again and again in its history militant minorities have felt the need of re-"evaluating" it as an instrument for the realization of emerging contemporary ideals. Monasticism, the Crusades, the mendicant orders, the Reformation, the Society of the Friends and Christian Science were all born of new evaluations calling for different ways of life which Christian reformers believed to be necessary for the better performance by organized Christianity of its appointed task. The coming agitation of which this conference is the forerunner will be another of these revolts, but if it is to serve the existing needs of the church, it will have to be more permanently and comprehensively reconstructive than its predecessors. The only way in which it can be more constructive in its processes is to be more radical in its preliminary scepticism.

The fact that the ideals in which these students are interested are social and practical rather than personal or speculative has its important aspects, but it does not concern the heart of their inquiry. In order adequately to appraise the church as an instrument for the realization of social ideals, they must first appraise it as an instrument for the realization of any and all ideals. Not only the reformers in the church but the churches themselves have again and again wrestled with the problem of incorporating in the life of Christian communities the living aspirations of different epochs. It has made many gallant and costly attempts. The means which serious Christians have used to persuade their brethren to act as they believed a Christian should—viz. ritual, prayers, exhortations, persuasions, threats, commands—have failed except under unusually happy conditions to overcome human inertia and perversity. What reason have the present generation of Christian reformers to anticipate that they will induce Christians to live according to social ideals when previous reformers, sometimes with the ultimate assistance of the church, have failed to induce them except occasionally to live according to ascetic, communistic, puritan or humane ideals?

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The value of the Evanston conference will depend upon the light which its discussions will throw on the answer to this question. The direction from which they may hope to obtain such light is, we believe, indicated by the quotation from Prof. Harrison S. Elliott, which we have placed at the head of this article. If the Christian churches really wish to equip themselves to convert their members to a Christian way of life, whatever that may be, they must as Professor Elliott says revise their procedures in the light of an educational and experimental conception of religious truth. It has failed in the past because the means at its disposal were inadequate to its ends, because its procedure has been neither educational nor experimental. It will succeed in the future in so far as it can evoke out of an educational and experimental method which is frankly critical and wary the kind of spiritual momentum which heretofore has usually been associated with a dogmatic or moralistic fundamentalism.

Christians are at present divided from one another or united with one another in church groups by virtue of differences and similarities of opinion about the meaning of Christianity and the organization of the church. Their bonds of union have to an equal extent served as their excuses for disagreement. They have spent much of their religious energy in disputing about the formulas of Christian truth and have been diverted from their essential task which is that of translating Christianity into a living experience. The route which may lead to a restoration of the unity of the church is the route whereby Christianity may come nearer to realizing its implicit social and spiritual aspirations. It is the systematic effort to discover how Christianity or any other vision of human fulfillment can be projected into the minds of ordinarily behaving human beings. The effort demands a smaller preoccupation with Christian literature and a greater preoccupation with a methodical exploration of human nature, its habits, its passions, its conflicts, its activities, its visions and its possibilities. The function of the church will be to insist on the need of such an exploration and to provide a favorable environment for it, but the burden of the search will have to be carried by the individual who will create his personal viaduct to the Christian way of life—the route of self-knowledge.

From this point of view every individual Christian would be thought of as an experimental project in religious education, whose possibilities the church would seek to unfold. The church would devote itself to the art of realizing individual and social life in so far as the realization could be accomplished by self and social knowledge. The art would be communicated through a method with which every individual would have to experiment for himself. A demonstration of the value of method, not only in relation to learning but in relation to living, would reunite science with religion and would constitute the major contribution which naturalism can make to the intellectual and moral advance of humanity. If the Christian church does not realize that only by the application of an experimental scientific method to religious education can it vindicate its own essential pretensions to represent on earth the process of human salvation, some other religious body will.

The function of the church has always been in a sense educational. It has always been the custodian of a priceless truth which it has been occupied in transmitting to successive generations of human beings who were born in a state of ignorance. Because its function was educational its members have always labored to understand the truth they were transmitting, and their methods of instruction were always associated with what they understood Christianity to be. Benedict, Francis of Assisi, the Inquisition, the Christian moralists who propagated virtue among the people by threatening sinners with everlasting torment—all corresponded to different types of religious education which at different times have found favor with the church. But recently the increasing acceptance of the view that human nature is a natural product, partly warped and partly fulfilled in its present social environment, has revolutionized the problem of religious education. It must call in an experimental method, because if this view of human nature is true, the church does not know enough and will never know enough in advance to dispense with experimental inquiries undertaken by individuals, during the process of living, into the possibilities of their own lives. But it is peculiarly difficult for the experts in traditional religious education to imagine that individual experiment which assumes lack of authoritative formulated knowledge has any part to play in Christian salvation. These experts are accustomed to speak with authority, and they do not realize that an attitude of authority on their part forms an insuperable obstacle to a religious education which would transform Christianity into a living experience. That is why it is well for a conference of students to assemble in Evanston and to ask the church to consider whether it knows enough to realize Christian ideals in human life. The putting of the question may help to educate the educators.

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HERBERT CROLY, PRESIDENT, ROBERT HALLOWELL, SECRETARY AND PUBLISHER, DANIEL MEBANE, TREASURER

EDITORS

HERBERT CROLY BRUCE BLIVEN ROBERT LITTELL
ALVIN JOHNSON GEORGE SOULE STARK YOUNG
ROBERT MORSS LOVETT

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

JANE ADDAMS JOHN DEWEY EDMUND WILSON
GILBERT SELDES E. C. LINDEMAN LEO WOLMAN
WALDO FRANK

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A Few Billions for Consumers

WHY do you buy one make of automobile rather than another? Because the first cost is less; because your old car was the same make; because you like the lines, or the gadgets, or the winged whatsis on the radiator; because there isn't so much down for cash; because you've heard the upkeep is low; because nobody could get away from a salesman like that; because everybody's buying them this year. . . . You do not know, nobody in America knows, the real comparative value of your car, for the money you pay for it, and for the average use it will be put to. Broadly speaking, your purchase of a motor, while a fascinating game, is a blind one. You are not likely to get as badly sunk as on the stock exchange, but the fundamental principles have much in common.

For the expenditure of about a million dollars, it would be possible to take every current type of motor car made, over a standardized 10,000-mile road test under controlled conditions. One million dollars is roughly the equivalent of Mr. Ford's output every two hours. At the close of the experiment, the figures for each make could be published in parallel columns, without comment. Just the cold figures—so many miles per gallon of gas and oil, so many failures of one kind or another per 1,000 miles, so much braking ability from a given speed, so much accelerating capacity, so much tire wear, and so on. Would this help you in choosing your next car? Not if you were an exponent of conspicuous consumption. But if you really wanted to get back of the advertising, the high-powered salesman and the dandy little jiggers on the dashboard, and find out what was the best car for your needs and for your money—it would help tremendously. As the motor car becomes increasingly a utility and decreasingly an emblem of swank, the help to the main body of purchasers would be untold. In the end such a list would set up standards of performing excellence, and force persistently inferior types off the market altogether. For the million-dollar outlay, who shall say what savings in tens and scores of millions would be repaid to the American people?

The great bulk of the things which we consumers buy are never reviewed by any impartial testing body. Most of them advance upon us from behind a great smoke screen of advertising. As no advertiser was ever known not to insist that his product was the best, the consumer learns nothing of comparative values from this avalanche of encomiums.

Time to Re-tire
It Beats As It Sweeps As It Cleans } Both are
Gets All the Dirt by the Air Alone } vacuum cleaners
Just a Real Good Car
The Obedient Slave to Your Desires
Save the Surface and You Save All

Is there any help in this sort of thing at all? Worse, so able may be the psychology of the advertising, that the consumer may be led into buying a markedly inferior product. A certain roofing-paper concern accumulated large stocks hoping to secure government contracts during the War. Impartial tests found the material far below standard. Nothing daunted, the company disposed of the stocks to the general public through a nation-wide advertising campaign.

Given time enough, and trial and error enough, quality will in many cases, make itself felt. But consider the waste of this trial and error method as against a permanent source to which we might turn for the results of impartial tests and the setting of impartial standards.

The United States government has solved this problem some time since, for its own purposes, and provides a working model of how to do it, and what is to be gained from it. Each year the government buys some $300,000,000 of products—ranging all the way from thumbtacks to dredging machines; from baseballs to battleships. Nearly every kind of thing the general consumer buys, the government buys—though in not such great variety—foodstuffs, textiles, clothing, furniture, building materials, office supplies, shaving tackle, sporting goods, toilet articles . . . everything. But in buying much of this material, the several purchasing agents pay no attention to pretty girls or magazine covers, nor yet to super-salesmen with pants like the Prince of Wales. They pay attention to instructions from the Bureau of Standards. Half-way between Washington City and Chevy Chase, these great laboratories and testing rooms rise—magnificently on guard. Skilled chemists, physicists, engineers, research workers, in a hundred fields are passing continually and relentlessly upon the relative quality of the goods which the purchasing agent proposes to buy. During the last fiscal year, the Bureau made no less than 173,000 tests. For an operating cost of $2,000,000, it is estimated that the Bureau of Standards saves the government better than $100,000,000 every year—an investment which nets fifty-fold.

For years the government had been buying varnish at $4.37 or thereabouts per gallon. The Bureau with other governmental and industrial experts worked out a specification for varnish which costs $1.44 per gallon. The Navy alone saved $90,000 in buying varnish in 1923. The government buys fountain pen ink for $2.80 a dozen quarts. You will pay $12 to $14 at retail for an ink which is on the average inferior—for you do not buy to specification. The government will buy typewriter ribbons for $1.75 a dozen. You must pay $8 to $10. The Bureau has found that calcium chloride

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which is commonly used as a base for anti-freezing mixtures, corrodes an automobile radiator in about two years' time, and also encourages ignition leaks. Government cars stick to alcohol and water accordingly. Instead of Dermax for moistening stencils, which costs $3.20 a gallon in wholesale lots, the government uses a compound worked out in its laboratories which costs from 5 to 23 cents a gallon, and is equally good. Nor is the government always the sole beneficiary of the work of the Bureau of Standards. Recently it helped the cement industry. For years cement had been shipped in burlap sacks, the impression in the trade being that such were stronger than cotton sacking. The Bureau took 300 burlap sacks and 300 cotton sacks, filled them full of hot fresh ground cement and shipped them 200 miles—back and forth, under all sorts of conditions. The cotton sacks came through the racket on top. As a result the industry will probably buy $10,000,000 of cotton sacks, instead of the usual $13,000,000 of burlap, and save $3,000,000 annually. The methodology of scientific purchasing is roughly as follows: When a given product is under consideration, the Bureau of Standards' engineers first secure samples of all varieties in the field, and subject them to rigid tests. Thus they inform themselves as to current status of the technical art, and also determine comparative quality. Secondly, they go into the field of pure theory and ask, what is the highest quality obtainable; what is the perfect product? There is some higher mathematics and a formula or two. Then the engineers write a *specification,* based both on theory and on the available types. The specification represents the best type for the purpose on hand as governed by the practicable limits of manufacturing and reasonable cost. The specification is then presented to manufacturers for their bids. When the manufacturer says—as he sometimes does—that it cannot be made, the Bureau's engineers will either go out and show him how to make it—which has often happened—or, if he is right, they will lower the specification a notch or two.

To illustrate concretely. The government became suspicious of gasoline pumps in filling stations in the District of Columbia. This was not a case of wanting to buy pumps, so much as wanting to know if government cars were getting full measure. The Bureau was put to work. Engineers tested measurements, and found them pretty uniformly short. In the state of Illinois alone, they calculated that consumers of gasoline were losing $500,000 a year from filling station shortages. All types of pumps were then tested. The theory of a perfect, 100 percent pump was developed. Finally a specification was written, which if followed by a pump manufacturer would give him an error of not over one-half of one percent. Pumps made to this specification will give the consumer fair measure, where unspecified pumps had given him generally speaking nothing but shortages. Certain local political areas are now protecting their citizens by requiring pumps made to specification; the District of Columbia is so protected, but over great areas, filling station shortages are still the rule.

Here are two simple government specifications covering the purchase of foodstuffs:

> *Chocolate—best quality unsweetened:* to contain not more than 3 percent of ash insoluble in water, 3.5 percent of crude fiber, 9 percent of cocoa starch, and not less than 45 percent of cocoa fat per pound. (Such chocolate the government buys for 15.5 cents a pound. We pay around 45 cents, retail distribution costs included.)
>
> *Gelatin—granulated in packages:* must not contain bacteria in excess of 50,000 per gram, arsenic in excess of 1.4 parts per million, copper in excess of 30 parts per million, and zinc in excess of 100 parts per million.

The government alone has developed over 11,000 specifications covering, besides foodstuffs, soaps, denims, metal polishes, hooks and eyes, motor boat engines, shipping cases, and so on indefinitely. The total of specifications available from all sources runs to something like 27,000.

A scientist long on the Bureau's staff estimates that for the $2,000,000 spent annually in testing and research, a saving of at least a billion dollars a year would follow the release of the information to the public at large. The invaluable data which save the government a hundred millions, are not available, in a form that can be used, to that wider body of consumers who pay the government's bills. A consumer can secure a specification—the chocolate one for instance—by writing to the proper government service, but he cannot secure the results of tests made on products now in the market, and so guide his buying. With the naked specification only, he must hire a chemist or an engineer to find out what makes, if any, meet it. Practically, then the specification can only help the large buyer. Test information is available to state and local governments, but for reasons best known perhaps to their politicians they have not made much use of it to date. As a result some manufacturers of weighing scales and measuring devices, have dumped their rejected instruments into local unpoliced jurisdictions.

Finally it should be noted that the Bureau has only scratched the surface of the total commodity field. For every product it has tested, there probably remain twenty to which no sufficient tests or specifications have ever been applied. Granting the impracticability of ever—through any agency—testing all, there still remains an immense area susceptible to the methodology, and potential economy, over and above the field now covered by the Bureau. Not one billion, but several billion probably to be saved when the markets of the whole nation are considered.

Now why precisely does this technique make for savings; what wastes does it eliminate? When goods are bought to specification, quality is set;

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scientifically defined. The buyer knows exactly what he is getting; the manufacturer knows exactly what he has to produce. Competition must then descend from the cloudy heights of sales appeals and braggadocio generally, to just one factor—price. Who can meet the specification at the lowest price? Quality being predetermined, there is no longer any argument as to who furnishes the "best" product—there isn't any best or worst to furnish except as the product may be better than the required minimum for the grade in question. And down the trapdoor goes on all the advertising and all the salesmanship which falls under the general head of persuasion—to use no harsher terms. Down goes the distribution overhead, and with it the cost of the delivered article.

Secondly, when competition is on price only, a battering ram begins to operate on profit margins. The manufacturer who shades his profit per unit the most, is likely to get the order. Down goes the cost to the consumer again—the maker secures large distribution at a small margin of profit per unit—the Ford-Filene idea. Both manufacturer and consumer benefit.

Thirdly, the manufacturing process itself tends to become simplified. It is no longer necessary to make so many styles and variations on the chance of catching the consumer's eye. "Special features," fancy packages, drop out of the picture. One can produce in large units; one has a better chance of "balancing the load" in plant operation. Thus the concern which now makes the government's ink has divested itself of all snappy executives and expensive trappings, and in a plain but well lighted loft in downtown New York, bends all its energies to making good ink, day in day out, with no fear of seasonal variations, fluctuations, or market upsets during the present contract. Less romance perhaps, but more sound workmanship. With the drop in manufacturing costs, down goes the price again.

Fourthly—and this is a category of the utmost importance—the consumer, buying to specification, is in a position to buy for a *specific purpose*. If tests have made it clear that a cheaper product or a lower grade or a different product will adequately meet his need, he can buy the cheaper article and save the difference. *He no longer has to protect himself by paying the highest price, fearing that cheaper grades will be adulterated, or go wrong.* How often have you and I paid through the nose because our only test of quality was the highest price in sight? For certain uses, the Society of Automobile Engineers reported that lubricating oil costing twenty cents a gallon was as good as oil at $1.35. It met the specification, and the purpose, at one-seventh the cost. Tests show that certain hardware in ten-cent stores has just as good steel as hardware in stores where the price is two or three times as much. The latter article has a little fancier handle, but for a given use, the tools are identical. Government research finds that for many uses reworked wool has better wearing qualities than all-virgin wool. It finds that certain limestones make better building material for specific uses than sandstones—thus upsetting an ancient dogma. If and when the consumer can be guaranteed by test and specification that the cheaper grade meets his purpose as well or better, down goes the price again.

Fifthly, buying to specification eliminates all possibility of deliberate adulteration. It drives the specious, the jerry-built, the actively hurtful from the market. Such products often represent a dead loss of manpower and raw material in the making, to say nothing of the terrific overhead burden of astute salesmanship which now keeps them on the market. In the aggregate this too will operate to lower prices by eliminating waste.

Now we are in a position to see why the government can buy materials at only a fraction of the cost which the general consumer must pay. The government secures a certain, and on some goods a unique advantage, to be sure, because it buys in large quantities, but over and above this factor, are the five channels of saving enumerated above. When a specification cut the cost of varnish from $4.37 to $1.44, the saving had nothing whatever to do with quantity purchases. It was due to the debunking process alone. A group of small consumers buying to specification may well equal one large government purchase, and while the physical cost of distribution to the small consumers must inevitably be more, and so increase the cost somewhat, the larger savings of the five channels are potentially identical for both.

There are billions to be won if the consumer—both ultimate and intermediate (like the cement industry)—can follow the example of the federal government in purchasing material. Information as to comparative quality—as exemplified in testing automobiles—is one arm of the technique; buying to specifications which flow from tests and research is the other. Who shall conduct the tests, and what are the practicable possibilities of making the method available to the general consumer, will be considered in a subsequent article.

STUART CHASE AND F. J. SCHLINK.

A Georgian Anthology

Never was landscape quite so clipped and callow
As this between these pale, bucolic covers:
On these smooth lawns the water-color lovers
Stray through the copse where kine and crocus follow;
And elms—elms lonely, leaning, haunted, hollow—
Are packed with thrushes, wrens and wheeling plovers
As, over every sprig of thyme, there hovers
At least one curlew or nostalgic swallow.

Here, far beyond the reach of life or trams,
A world composed of ever-verdant vales
Is thick with darkling wings and thrice-told tales,
Blackbirds and buttercups and gentle dams;
While, from the hawthorn, immemorial lambs
Keep moonlit trysts with deathless nightingales.

LOUIS UNTERMEYER.

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What Makes a First-Page Story?

A Theory Based on the Ten Big News Stories of 1925

FOR the better part of a generation newspaper editors have been quoting Dana to their cub reporters:

"If a dog bites a man, that isn't news. But if a man bites a dog, that *is* news."

All things come to him who waits. After three decades it finally came to pass that in the year 1925 a man did bite a dog. The man's name was Frank Kigger, the dog was a bulldog, and the scene of the encounter was in Pittsburgh. The incident was promptly telegraphed around the country, but rather generally ignored. After the world had waited thirty years for a man to bite a dog, no presses stopped, no sirens shrieked, and neither man nor beast was pictured in the papers.

The trouble with man biting dog, from the point of view of first-page headlines, is that it really doesn't make a story. Plainly it is news. Dana's definition is sound enough when it defines news as an interruption of routine and a departure from the expected: for by these tokens an event separates itself from the whole mass of possible truth and becomes capable of news-reporting. But this does not determine emphasis. Over the flood of news thus made available, the editors comb for those particular items which they believe worth playing up on their first pages. And the process by which these items are selected is an important social process. For in large measure it determines what people will read and sometimes think about, and with what degree of interest. Yet this process, though it is tied up intimately with the manufacture of opinion, has had precious little study. Much more has been written about Cæsar's bridges and the eyes of flies. What is it that makes a first-page story for the papers?

II

For the sake of applying the case method at least in rudimentary form, rather than starting from a point in space, I have attempted to list the ten big stories of the present year: basing the choice on the New York Times index, the files of a half-dozen papers in different sections of the country and the suggestions of three news editors of metropolitan newspapers. The results are as follows:

None of my editors disagrees and the record itself leaves little room for doubt, as to the biggest single news story of 1925: that story was the story of the "evolution trial" at Dayton, Tennessee.

The nine other stories on the list, with no attempt to rank them in order, follow:

The Shenandoah disaster
Floyd Collins entombed at Cave City
Gunnar Kasson's race to Nome
The coal strike
The Caillaux mission
The Rhinelander case
Gerald Chapman
Amundsen's attempted dash to the Pole
Colonel Mitchell's attack on the Army

A second ten might read like this:

The Károlyi case
Red Grange
Locarno
Tammany's defeat of Hylan
Paavo Nurmi
The oil reserves
The fight over Charles B. Warren
The eclipse of the sun
The Italian debt negotiations
The PN-9—No. 1, disabled off Hawaii

III

Now if it is assumed that these lists are accurate enough for our present purposes (and I believe that both the average editor and the average reader will find that they include his favorites), what is there that they show about the editor's choice of his big stories? What is the greatest common divisor divisible into these varied happenings?

Obviously it is no matter of taste or ethics; obviously it is no matter of ultimate importance to the human race; obviously it is no matter of final termination of the event itself in some easily classifiable conclusion. For both lists, in the light of any of these attempts at measurement, are a mere jumble. The one certain thing which can be said of each of them is that in the last analysis each item represents a fight.

Sometimes the fight is open and avowed: as in Gerald Chapman's fight for life, Colonel Mitchell's onslaught on the army, and the war over wages in the coal fields. Sometimes the fight is less explicitly acknowledged: as when M. Caillaux trades polite proposals with the American debt commissioners. Sometimes the fight is less a fight of man versus man than of man versus nature: as in the Shenandoah's struggle with a thunder-storm and Gunnar Kasson's battle with an Arctic gale. Sometimes, as in the Scopes trial at Dayton, the fight is so much of a fight, and the blows struck echo with so much fury, that nothing save the fight survives the issue in the news. The nature of the fight may vary; but some sort of fight is present in each instance: even, in some degree, in the story of the sun's

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eclipse. For the sun's eclipse was not only an extraordinary spectacle but an exciting contest between mere man and the heavens, in the matter of mere man's ability to predict a celestial phenomenon to the very second; it was a spectacular physical combat, too, between sun and moon, with instinctive memories on the part of man, the bystander, of days when he dreaded his extermination.

If you would see how much gimp comes out of a story when the fight comes out of it, conceive M. Caillaux coming to thank us for a loan already funded or the Rhinelanders agreeing not to take their case to court. There is not much out of which to make a story, in a love feast.

IV

We begin, then, with a fight. It is a second characteristic of the bulk of these twenty stories that the fight is personal.

We encounter, here, an essential contradiction. It is my impression that for the press the greatest of all stories, while always partaking in some form of a struggle, are impersonal struggles, elemental struggles, catastrophic struggles. Thus, for example, the outbreak of war in Europe, the sinking of the Titanic, the Japanese earthquake of 1923. Nevertheless it is true, I think—and it may be true either because elemental and catastrophic forces are infrequently in conflict, or because we prefer not to take note of them as such—that in the ordinary run of news stories the fight tends always to be a combat between personal antagonists. Thus it happens, for example, that each one of the ten stories in the first list above, with the possible exception of the coal strike, and each one of the ten stories in the second list, with the exceptions of Locarno, the Italian debt and the sun's eclipse, has either a personal hero or a personal villain. Mitchell, Caillaux, Károlyi, Collins, Chapman, Nurmi, Red Grange, Warren: these are names which have twinkled in the bright lights of the headlines.

Perhaps it is true, as Mr. F. P. Adams has suggested, that "the story of an individual is generally more interesting than that of a group, for the reason that the reader identifies himself with an individual." It is what the psychologists call sublimation, and it is a process easier to effect in the case of one man than of a crowd. It is possible to feel like Gerald Chapman in the dock, but difficult to feel like the Russian army.

Certainly it is true that with the personal element introduced, a good story becomes an even better story. The race to Nome became a great story when we knew that Gunnar Kasson drove the dogs; the Scopes trial at Dayton reached its heights only when it had become a bitter personal brawl between Bryan and Clarence Darrow.

V

We have, then, a fight and a fight which is personal. The next factor, as I see it, is that this personal fight must be between well-identified antagonists.

It is here that Dana's definition, while accurately defining news, stops noticeably short of defining a great news story. For Dana's definition does not go beyond the first selective process. And if a man named Kigger bites an unnamed dog in Pittsburgh, the right comment is—what of it? Apparently, nothing. To extract the full benefit of the drama in the situation it is necessary to imagine Mr. Coolidge biting Rin-tin-tin.

Nothing is more characteristic of great news stories than that they are not made by unknowns. If it is true of the great stories of 1925 that they are fights and chiefly personal fights, it is also true of them that their antagonists are figures of some stature in contemporary folk lore. Either they are figures of some stature before the incident begins—thus Bryan, Darrow, Caillaux, the Rhinelander family, Chapman, Doheny, Sinclair, the President and Senate quarreling over Warren—or they are figures which can take on stature because their story happens to develop slowly and holds off from a climax long enough to familiarize the public with new names: thus Floyd Collins, Count Károlyi, Commander Rodgers of the PN-9, and Colonel Mitchell. If Colonel Mitchell had fired one resounding broadside and waited for the echo he would not have been a national figure for the year 1925. He was a national figure because the poolrooms and the Sunday-schools, the barber-shops and the cigar-stores, could talk him over between sallies.

VI

We have come this far: we have defined a great news story as the story of a personal fight between well identified antagonists; we can add, I think, this other qualification: that into the best story enters the element of suspense.

How true this is, a comparison of two stories indicates. The first story is the Floyd Collins story. The second story, following it within a month, is the story of a cave-in at Coal Glen, North Carolina. Both stories were stories of disaster: men trapped in darkness underneath the ground, frantic attempts to reach them while they lived, a wall of stone holding out against all efforts at their rescue. But the second story, from any social point of view, was the more important of the two. For here was not one man facing death, but actually seventy-one; here was not one life ultimately lost, but fifty-three; for that was the final chapter in North Carolina. Nevertheless, this grim story was ignored throughout the country. It was never really in the headlines, and in no metropolitan newspaper did it receive, from first to last, so much as six precious inches of newsprint. The Collins story, on the

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other hand, ran on for almost endless pages and into almost endless detail. What, possibly, can account for this amazing difference in emphasis?

One factor we have touched upon: the greater interest in the story of one man as against the story of a crowd of men. A second factor lies in the essential character of news as Dana's definition sums it up: a departure from routine. For the Carolina story was the story of a mine disaster, "happening every day"; Collins was the average man who risked death of his own accord. But there is also this additional factor: the Carolina story was over in three days, and from the start only one end to it seemed possible; the Collins story ran on for fifteen days before it was even discovered whether the man was dead or living, and in that space of time the reporters had him many times saved and many times despaired of.

In short, the reporters wrote a thriller, and there is no formula for stirring interest which is surer fire. In some form and at some point the element of suspense enters into every great news story: suspense as to the story's end in life or death, in victory or defeat, in honor or demotion. Gunner Kasson, Caillaux and a coal strike—the PN-9, Colonel Mitchell and a battle for the oil reserves: each time interest lies not only in an event which has already signalized itself in action but in a dénouement which has still to come. The best news story, like the most successful fiction in the magazines, leaves its reader counting hours for the next edition.

VII

We arrive, then, at this point: that the great first-page story, as it is reflected in the news of 1925, is the story of a personal fight between well identified antagonists which involves the element of suspense. This definition is broad enough. Yet some light, I think, its does throw upon certain phases of the relationship between press and public.

1. It is charged by the public against the press that the press is wilfully destructive: that it will print anything derogatory to any man on its first page, and anything commendatory to him on page twenty. Thus, for example, the case of William Brassfield, a Negro arrested in New York City for the murder of a Miss Florence Kane. Brassfield's arrest was first-page news. The New York Times, for instance, carried the story there, with two full columns of newsprint and a six-galleyed headline. Then Brassfield was exonerated. What happened? The Times buried this second piece of news on page twenty-one, with three inches of type and a microscopic headline. Was the Times out to do Brassfield as much harm as possible? I doubt it. The trouble with Brassfield's exoneration was this: with no fight and no suspense it did not make a story. Do not look to the press for exonerations. Look to it for stories.

2. It is charged by the public against the press that there is a touch-and-go quality in the emphasis which the press attaches to its news, utterly destructive to the making of any picture of reality upon which men can act. M. Caillaux's visit ends: immediately the American press, which has been spreading the French debt lavishly over its first pages, drops the French debt as if it were a hot potato. Yet plainly the French debt has not ceased miraculously to exist; all of the problems in its payment are still present, still ebbing and flowing with new developments. What hope is there, with emphasis in the press flashing like a drunken searchlight in the dark, for the creation of an intelligent opinion in America regarding French obligations?—Such criticism ignores one point. Caillaux is gone; for the first page, that ends it. A personal fight which is no longer personal and no longer a fight, is no longer a story.

3. Finally, it is charged by the public against the press that its dominating interest is in sex and crime. I think this is to misread motives. The dominating interest of the press seems so often to be in sex and crime because sex and crime, by the standards we have been discussing, so often furnish the best story. For here, compact and vivid, is the personal fight with the well-identified antagonists and the stage set for suspense. And if theology and religion envy sex and crime, and sigh for first-page space, all that theology and religion need to do is to produce a good personal encounter. Witness Dayton, Tennessee.

The quest of the press is in search of battle. And the same great mechanism of news gathering which was put at work in Dayton can be put at work and has been put at work to report prizefights, executions, Republican conventions and Rhinelander divorce trials. Eagerly, with the same elaborate planning, the same remarkable economy in time, the same outlay in money and the same energy and talent of many men, the press turns from a Leopold and Loeb to the excommunication of a Bishop.

CHARLES MERZ.

Dilemma

There are two wives that you can be,
And either one remains the worse:
The blind, whose hands are both for me,
Or the wide-eyed and the perverse.

If never a finger strays to flesh
That is not mine, shall I be glad?
When it returned it might refresh
Me with a touch it never had.

I would not feel your palms grow pale
Because I held them from the light.
Go . . . And yet I shall bewail
Your absent eyes when they are bright

With treacherous thought that tries my blood,
With some intent I would pluck out—
Were it not that while I stood
The other wife awoke the doubt.

MARK VAN DOREN.

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Washington Notes

NO wonder the American Petroleum Institute which, as has recently been explained, is the instrument through which the oil interests of the country coördinate and cohere — no wonder the Institute reached into the White House and grabbed away Judson C. Welliver, the late literary aide of the President, paying him a salary large and luscious enough to dragoon him into an avocation which in former days he despised and denounced with a fire and force unsurpassed even in the Senate of twenty years ago. It now develops that the Institute is to be one of the principal targets of this session of Congress and Senator Couzens of Michigan, through his Internal Revenue Investigating Committee, has already opened fire with some seventeen-inch guns.

I cannot help but think that the oil interests had an inkling of some sort of trouble at this session last summer when they opened up negotiations with Jud. In some quarters here it is called a premonition. In others it is referred to as the foresight caused by the consciousness of guilt. It ought to be understood that nothing of a sinister nature has as yet been proved against the oil interests or the oil institute, but certainly a great deal has been charged. It is for instance alleged by the majority of the Couzens Committee that the Institute is a sort of funnel through which the oil interests handle their tax cases and that as a result of tax favors through faulty allowances for discovery and depletion valuations literally hundreds of millions of dollars of tax payments have been successfully evaded. This sounds sensational enough. It is backed up with a lot of impressive testimony and buttressed with names and figures.

It ought, on form, to get somewhere. The charges are made not by some reckless and irresponsible Democrat from the South fired by low partisan purpose, but by a regular Republican Senator from a great Republican state. Moreover he is a Republican with so many million dollars of his own that he takes rank among the ten or twelve richest men of America and as such naturally commands the reverence and respect of the regular Republican organs and the party propaganda machine. Yet if Senator Couzens gets any real results from his broadside against the oil interests I shall be greatly surprised. The reason of course is that the American Petroleum Institute is only his incidental target. The real mark at which he shoots is Andrew W. Mellon, the aged gentleman so often and earnestly referred to as "the greatest Secretary of the Treasury since Alexander Hamilton" that no small portion of his fellow citizens have come to believe it, although if there is a single one who can present a logical, coherent and sound basis for this belief I have not so far run across him.

I would like to argue this point to the bitter finish pointing out that the Mellon reputation for being a financial genius as a Treasury Secretary is based partly on the glamor that surrounds a man as rich as he and partly upon the tax reduction theory to which his name is attached and which, I am creditably informed, did not originate in the Mellon mind at all, though it meets the Mellon views exactly one hundred percent. I should like further to point out that the tremendous propaganda behind the Mellon bills has necessarily functioned as propaganda for Mr. Mellon personally, although I acquit the Secretary, who is the most modest of men, from any such purpose or desire. I would like further to point out that the basic policies upon which the Treasury is now conducted and the national debt being reduced are policies laid down under Houston and Carter Glass six or seven years ago and continued without modification under Mr. Mellon. I would like to point out a number of other things, but what is the use?

To the average citizen in this part of the country whose intellectual diet is almost exclusively provided by the New York, Philadelphia and Boston newspapers this sounds like treason, sacrilege and blasphemy. If you attempt to discuss Mr. Mellon in an analytical way with almost any of them, dissenting from the Alexander Hamilton notion about him, it usually brings down upon your head a deluge of eulogistic adjectives but no argument. Indignantly it is declared that he is a fine man. Of course he is a fine man, full of virtues and with many admirable traits of mind and character. Who said he was not a fine man? He is, but if he has been a genius in this job then I can beat Paderewski playing the piano.

But to get back on the track—the reason the oil interests will not suffer as much as they might from the Couzens charges is that they are really charges against the Mellon administration of the Treasury Department and Mr. Mellon will have to make the defense of the oil interests. They can leave their case in his hands, or rather in the hands of that able and vigorous young man, Garrard Winston, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, who renders Mr. Mellon no little help in his public statements, public policies and defenses. By the time the versatile Mr. Winston, who swings a potent pen, gets through, the cutting point of the Couzens charges will be blunted and a considerable part of the public will regard the Senator from Michigan as a low fellow who, out of personal spite, is trying to discredit "the greatest Secretary of the Treasury since Alexander Hamilton." At least so it seems to me. Under existing conditions it is no more possible so far as the public is concerned to hurt either Mr. Mellon or Mr. Coolidge by criticism or attack than it is to get in the public mind a clear and accurate picture of either. The one they have has been too deeply implanted.

Mr. Welliver's successor at the White House is Stewart Crawford, whose sketch and picture have already appeared in the daily papers. Mr. Crawford did not take up his new duties in time to be of any assistance on either the message or the Chicago speech. Since then there has been little to do in his line and his chief effort seems to be to make himself as inconspicuous a part of the White House circle as possible—certainly a wise policy if he wants to avoid the stirring up of the Massachusetts wasps who had their stingers all nicely sharpened for the newcomer.

He appears to be a nice enough young fellow and the

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fact that he once worked on the New York Herald-Tribune should not be held against him. It is possible to get over that. More recently he figured in some sort of capacity around Mr. Waterman's headquarters in the New York mayoralty campaign and is said to have come to Mr. Coolidge highly recommended by a certain Charles D. Hilles of New York—whoever he may be.

T. R. B.

Washington.

The New O'Neill Play

The Fountain, by Eugene O'Neill. Greenwich Village Theatre. December 10, 1925.

THE FOUNTAIN represents a beautiful mood on Eugene O'Neill's part and a departure from his familiar paths. It is set down as a romance; its general tone is poetic; and it is more or less historical subject matter. The entertainment that we get at the Greenwich Village Theatre is pretty dull on the whole; from the vision scene, the death, the quarrel with the bishop, and somewhat from the torture scene with Nano the Indian, we get a certain amount of thrill and beauty; most of the rest leaves us half bored. The way to take The Fountain is to see that it has a moving and high theme, and that it expresses a significant phase in the dramatist's development. It tries after a field that cannot but enlarge his scope in both material and style. From this effort Eugene O'Neill may, if he will, profit for his future. It was worth his while to try it. And a genuine interest in his accomplishment now and after could not overlook The Fountain or fail to see it.

The defects of The Fountain are largely those of style, of words almost. Its outline is fairly well established. Ponce de Leon in a courtyard of Granada is visited by a lady with whom he has had an affair. They are to part forever. He is young, hard, full of ambition. A Moor is killed. The lady's husband, after she has gone, appears. There is a quarrel, a wound. Ponce de Leon leaves Spain with Christopher Columbus, to escape retribution, to seek new fortunes. In the New World he becomes governor. Beatriz comes to him, sent by her mother, who loved Ponce de Leon till her death. He falls in love with Beatriz. The dream of youth seizes him. He tortures the Indian captive for the secret of the fountain whose rumor has spread abroad; from it he will drink and renew his youth. In the jungles of the newly discovered Florida he is betrayed and set on by the Indians. In the monastery where he lies dying Beatriz comes to him, bringing his nephew. In him she has found again the young Ponce de Leon of old whom her mother had taught her to adore. The dying man finds his youth in the eternal fountain of the soul.

If the pattern of this narrative is not so strong as that of The Emperor Jones or The Hairy Ape, it is at least clear. The single scenes have also a fair security of design. But in a play like The Hairy Ape the story form itself is the play. The myth pattern expresses almost all there is to be expressed. Such a play has also the advantage of an easier and more accessible diction. Its language is of the God-damn, get-to-hell-out-of-here type, which can more or less shoulder and explode its own way as it goes. But in The Fountain we must have an engaging and powerful diction, words that are beautiful, biting, inevitable, that delight and compel, that move and carry us along with the high design, that persuade and create, that grow radiant and unforgettable with the needed darkness and light. For such writing we listen far too often in vain; the written style of The Fountain is almost embarrassingly unequal. I cannot quote exactly but, for one of many instances, Beatriz said something once about Ponce de Leon's being to her mother the supreme example of the highest chivalry; if she did not say that she was quite capable of saying worse. And even that is nothing to the words that the Indian braves speak beside the spring. On the other hand, the last scene and many of Ponce de Leon's lines are beautiful and exalted, though not enough so to carry off the whole effect that the writing produces on us.

The case of The Fountain brings up the issue that we have all got to begin talking about in our theatre: words, the value of written dialogue, which, it cannot be forgotten, is of all the elements that go to make up the art of the theatre, the most engaging, the most permanent, immediate and binding.

The excellence of The Fountain lies in its superb reach after a certain poignant, tragic beauty and variety of idea. The lure of new-springing life and of the secret in the strange, far eyes of the savage captive, the single soul as the drop from the eternal fountain and returning into it, such motives make a fine and gallant theme to try.

The production of The Fountain is the most difficult problem of this season in the theatre. The direction was by Mr. Robert Edmond Jones. Taken all in all it is an interesting accomplishment, sometimes a dull one, sometimes important. The eleven scenes are expertly managed in their time intervals. The settings are always at least adequate. The scene on Columbus's flagship is admirable. The setting for the spring to which Ponce de Leon comes for the enchanted drink is an out-of-doors design that is most distinguished and splendid. In color it is all black and sombre green. In form it is harsh and severe, clawing, hard edges, simple, strict forms. It is easily the pinnacle of the whole occasion.

The costumes for The Fountain are the best in Mr. Jones's career. Beatriz's first gowns have too much tinsel, I think, but her white gown when she appears in Ponce de Leon's vision is almost incredibly beautiful. The duenna's costume, with its black and white, its silver and rubies, is the finest historical costume designing that I have ever seen.

Miss Rosalinde Fuller as Beatriz gave a good performance. Watching her you see that she stays always in the part, with intelligence and spirit, and this makes her an interesting player. Mr. Egon Brecher as Luis de Alvaredo, the hero's friend, was good after he became a monk and roamed the New World. In the first scene where he is the drunkard and the singer of ballads, Mr. Brecher did the play great harm. To him was entrusted the long and important speech in which the legend of the mythical fountain of youth and the glory of the far lands to the west is set forth and the play's theme launched. These lines

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he read without the right sense stresses, without poetic ear in sum, so that the meaning of them was disastrously blurred. A good deal of the minor acting was bad, some of it fair enough.

The rôle of Ponce de Leon fell to Mr. Walter Huston, and over his performance there will be many diverse opinions. The part fitted obviously the obvious romantic actor, and, to tell the truth, its theatrical fortunes might have gained in other hands than Mr. Huston's. But to me he seemed a piece of good casting, taken all in all. He fell too often into the tone and ways of old Cabot in Desire Under the Elms. His diction was unequal, sometimes rustic and blunt. He might have been warmer in places, more suave and elaborate as a Spanish nobleman. But this part of Ponce de Leon as Eugene O'Neill has written it is not easy. It is not the obvious, romantical, swaggering and spouting historical cavalier, but a figure in whose soul there is passion with some degree of hardness and drouth, there is a dream full both of obsession and austerity. And not a little of the portrait remains somewhat incomplete, left to the actor's imaginative invention and technical devices for getting along. If Mr. Huston lacked often distinct style and rhythm, he had something for such a part much more significant. I mean a certain authority of character. He knew intelligently what the rock-bottom of the rôle was about. He had no hint of the actor ass, almost inevitable in such a part. He has a fine natural voice and a direct virility of attack. His method is sometimes thin and dry, but it is pure. Even when he is bad he could always be bad in so much worse a way. Seeing his Ponce de Leon we may say that as an artist he has the youth and truthful vigor of this New World; what he needs now also is more of the Old World's rich investiture.

STARK YOUNG.

A. N. Whitehead and Bertrand Russell

TWO of the most interesting events of the literary season have been the publication of new non-technical books by those two distinguished mathematicians and former collaborators, Dr. A. N. Whitehead and Mr. Bertrand Russell. Mr. Russell is already well known to the general public, and his new book is a popular exposition of relativity, probably the best which has yet appeared. Dr. Whitehead, I suppose, is scarcely known at all; yet his Science and the Modern World, which incorporates a series of Lowell lectures delivered last year at Harvard, deserves success among a wide class of readers. The philosophical sections are difficult; but the historical chapters are fascinating and should be read by everyone who cares for the criticism of culture.

It is curious to compare Dr. Whitehead with Mr. Bertrand Russell. Both are professional mathematicians who have lately occupied themselves with physics and become concerned with the philosophic consequences of modern scientific theory. And both are men of a remarkably wide culture and a remarkably ready intelligence outside their particular fields. What makes them attractive to the general reader is their æsthetic sensibility, their original imagination and their vivid interest in all forms of human activity. And both are excellent writers. They are among the humanists of science.

Yet Dr. Whitehead and Mr. Russell present striking differences. Mr. Russell is really a type of eighteenth century philosopher, ironic, elegant, dry, humanitarian and anti-mystic. He expounds Einstein in much the same vein as Voltaire did Newton; or rather, he expounds him more flippantly. His A B C of Relativity, like his A B C of Atoms, is a masterpiece of lucidity. Mr. Whitehead, treating of similar matters, is not so much lucid as crystalline: he is not so easy to follow but he is more intense: his most abstract pages radiate a kind of incandescence. During the War, Mr. Russell's libertarian and humanitarian enthusiasm was fanned to a considerable heat: he then reached his highest pitch of earnestness. Since that time, though remaining loyally on the side of the angels, he has tended to take humanity with a little less seriousness: he seems to have reverted to what is for him the natural temper of mind, speculative, rationalistic, detached and a little perverse. He amuses himself now almost as readily by imagining disastrous destinies for humanity as by predicting victorious ones. The recent discoveries of science suggest to him ironic visions of the future of mankind: he sees us blowing ourselves to smithereens through releasing the energy of the atom or, as a result of the breaking down of the heaviest chemical elements, confronted with the dampening conclusion that the universe is running down, "with no mechanism for winding it up again."

For Dr. Whitehead, on the other hand, the discoveries of modern science supply the basis for a regenerative philosophy. Both Whitehead and Russell, of course, accept the more mysterious world of "events" which modern physics has substituted for the old world of material particles. But for Whitehead, the disproof by the quantum theory of the continuity of matter, the complication by relativity of the old ideas of space and time, provide blessed new doors of escape from the prison of a mechanistic universe. Where Mr. Russell delights in the paradoxes, Dr. Whitehead never pauses in his eagerness to press the new discoveries into the service of his faith. For, despite the mathematical aspect of the terms in which he has set forth his vision, Dr. Whitehead is religious, even mystic: we catch from him the glow of a fervor very different from the coolness of Russell. An amusing instance of their different temperaments is provided, in these two new books, by the accident that each has occasion to discuss Pythagoras. Dr. Whitehead's description of that philosopher is serious and respectful: it is not only, nor especially, the mathematical achievements of Pythagoras which excite his admiration, but rather the attitude of religious revelation with which they were accompanied. "The importance of definite number," he writes, "in the constitution of the Divine Nature, and the concept of the real world as exhibiting the evolution of an idea, can both be traced back to the train of thought set going by Pythagoras." Here is Mr. Russell's description of the prophet of geometry: "Pythagoras, like many of the greatest characters in history, perhaps never existed: he is a semi-mythical character, who combined mathematics and priestcraft in uncertain pro-

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portions. . . . He founded a religious sect, which thought it wicked to eat beans, and a school of mathematicians, who took a particular interest in right-angled triangles."

One remembers also, in reading Dr. Whitehead, the passage with which Mr. Russell concluded an essay on Bergson (published some years ago): "His (Bergson's) imaginative picture of the world," he wrote, "regarded as a poetic effort, is in the main not capable either of proof or disproof. Shakespeare says that life's but a walking shadow, Shelley says it is like a dome of many-colored glass, Bergson says it is a shell which bursts into parts that are again shells. If you like Bergson's image better, it is just as legitimate." Dr. Whitehead not only finds himself on some points in agreement with Bergson, whose "real becoming" and "élan vital" seem to have a good deal in common with his own "creative advance of nature"; but he has devoted one of the most striking chapters of Science and the Modern World precisely to the metaphysical importance of the romantic poets. He sees in both Wordsworth and Shelley a reaction against the eighteenth century conception of the universe as a machine; and he claims them as allies in his effort to introduce a new conception of the universe as an organism, incapable of being really understood from the mechanistic point of view. "Shelley's nature," he writes, "is in its essence a nature of organisms. . . . He is here an emphatic witness to a prehensive unification as constituting the very essence of nature."

It is beyond the capacity of the present writer to discuss Dr. Whitehead's philosophy, which will be dealt with authoritatively elsewhere in the New Republic; and these notes are therefore probably bound to be more or less inept. But it is perhaps worth while to differentiate Dr. Whitehead's characteristic qualities from those of Mr. Russell, because he seems to represent a type of mind which may be destined to emerge into prominence, not only in philosophy but in literature, in the general intellectual life. He has some remarkable points of resemblance, for example, to M. Paul Valéry, whom I discussed here last week. Both are crystalline, difficult, abstract and intense; and they seem to hold similar views. It is a significant coincidence (unless Whitehead has read Valéry), that both should have chosen the same illustration to throw into relief the spiritual impoverishment which ensued on the classical scientific views of the seventeenth century. Pythagoras heard in the heavens, wrote Valéry in his essay, Variations sur une "Pensée," the music of the spheres; "as for the Jews, they never speak of the heavens without celebrating their eloquence: 'The heavens announce the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims his handiwork'." Then he points out how the heavens fell dead beneath the scientific scrutiny of Pascal. "They (bodily substances)," writes Whitehead, "degenerated into a mechanism entirely valueless, except as suggestive of an external ingenuity. The heavens had lost the glory of God." These two writers are far from being the first to feel the spiritual obstructions presented by scientific materialism; but they are perhaps among the first modern writers in the scientific tradition to pass entirely beyond them.

EDMUND WILSON.

Creative Youth

THIS book, Creative Youth,* is bound to be intoxicating to a poet. When I was of high school age, my hair grew long, as, for some unknown reason, it is apt to do with a poet; but once I had a real haircut. A cousin of mine greeted me with laughter. She said to my mother, "I thought James was a poet; but I see it was only his long hair." I felt indignant, but a little inferior. The New York world I lived in thought of poetry as a little abnormal.

And here I pick up a book, written about half by the instructor and half by the pupils of a High School, albeit it is a private one, in New York, and I am transported into an atmosphere of that Athens where war and sport were mighty themes, but where art, where poetry, was in some ways mightier. At one swoop the bearded New England rhymesters disappear, the authentic classics are brought into hot proximity with contemporary art, and the school becomes a poetry workshop.

It starts with a girl writing the usual class poem: the ships that set sail on uncharted seas, some to be wrecked, others to arrive, etc. The instructor goes sick on it, all but one line:

> The ever-passing steps went by our door.

He takes a chance of discouraging her. He says, It's very bad. It is standard, rubberstamp stuff. He points out the details.

"But your first line!" he speaks with sudden enthusiasm. "That really startled and waylaid me. That first line is the poetry of our time." But let me quote:

> In a swift sketch, as the class was assembling, I told her of the method of the modern poets, how they boldly discarded all the "poetic phrases" and "poetic thoughts" of the past and had made fresh formulæ of word and idea to match their own observed world . . .
>
> Without a word of reply she left me abruptly to take a seat at the back of the room.
>
> During the period a girl came forward to say quietly, "You'd better let her go. She says she can't stand it here much longer." "Do tell her to go," I whispered back. I had failed in my attack, I thought; I had been too direct.
>
> She went out; . . . chairs and small tables were thrust aside roughly. . . . But she heard neither that, she claimed later, nor the laugh of the class. . . . Her friend volunteered as an apology, "She said she had a poem in her, and that if she had to stay in this room another minute without writing it she would scream."
>
> Before the hour was over she brought back the astonishing lines of The Door Stands Open. They came from her in a torrent, with hardly the necessity of an erasure.

The poem is astonishing. It is not great, but it is genuine. Lines like

> Here returns a man whose face must once have been
> like that youth's:

* Creative Youth, How a School Environment Set Free the Creative Spirit, by Hughes Mearns, with a foreword by Otis W. Caldwell, and an Anthology of the High School Verse. New York: Doubleday, Page & Co. $2.50.

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> His eyes are broken windows, and he babbles without sense

are as authentically native to our new America as the lines in Sandburg's Cool Tombs.

But the excitement had only begun with the discovery of this young poet. Before long there were children sitting up late into the night in the toils of imagination and wonder. A new poem that had the least merit in it swept the school first as a thrilling rumor; then it came in for group discussion; then, if it survived, it got itself into the school paper. The school library came into it. Books on modern poetry by Louis Untermeyer, Amy Lowell and others were devoured and debated. The modern poets went the rounds, with Frost a favorite, Edna Millay a close second. The classics came into the arena. And it came to the fine point where one delightful poem was held up by the pupils because next to the last line had the wrong wave-length . . .

Intoxicating! A hundred of the best poems making an anthology of no mean value, vivid, amusing, sometimes giving one the real shivers.

How shall we account for it? The director, Dr. Caldwell, speaking of the children, says: "They cannot truly enter into the world's literature except by their own endeavors to write; then in this trying, some reveal evidences of the new writers of our days." That is certainly true. Credit must go to a school, where, as Hughes Mearns writes in the introduction, there is the "paradox of an orderly obedient group living comfortably under authorities that they respect and follow, a group that at the same time is encouraged always to think freely and courageously for itself."

But greater than that, I think, is the spirit of our new America, which, in poetry, manifested itself unmistakably in 1914. It is at last in our blood, and I believe that what happened in Lincoln High School in New York could be duplicated in Detroit or in Houston. "The golden apples," as Jung said, "fall equally to a Schopenhauer and to a blacksmith's apprentice." The spirit in these children is the same as that which produced Spoon River and The Congo. And hence, while the number of poets cannot be increased by education, what we can hope for is that "audience interminable" which Walt Whitman prophesied; an America where art is a living thing.

JAMES OPPENHEIM.

Poe at Last

PERHAPS the great figures of nineteenth century American literature should come to be regarded chiefly as actors in the Epos of the American birth. With one or two exceptions, they did not produce great books. Yet all of them were heroes; were characters who in their defeats as in their victories fleshed and fixed radical features of our nascent world. Their lives—like the careers of the Patriarchs of Genesis—may prove more current in our future mind than any of their works.

This certainly will be the case with Poe. Despite his influence abroad, despite the range of his activity, he wrote neither verse nor prose intrinsically great. His significance is not to be extracted from his situation. And the construction of the creative Poe—the *true* Poe—has lagged, precisely because this situation was misunderstood. Poe paid bitterly for his youthful "byronism." From his neighbors and the Bostonians, it shrouded him in sentimental horror; from us, it has quarantined the man in an equally blinding sentimental glamor. His first biographer, Griswold, was incompetent. And Professor Woodberry inherited this incompetence for all his scholarly good will; since crucial features of Poe's life were hidden and since without them Poe's work, unlike organic and great art, lacked an entire dimension.

There has just been published a sheaf of letters* which will mark the true birth of Poe as an authentic, working figure in our cultural world. For the most part, they are notes written by Poe to his foster-father, with brief notations or replies by Mr. Allan. They give us at last the young Poe, the crucial Poe, and the world which he went forth to live in and to conquer. The first of them dates from the University of Virginia which the poet entered at seventeen; the last reveals him, seven years later, abandoned for the final time by Mr. Allan who has remarried and is soon to die. The years—from seventeen to twenty-four—are the years of Poe's confrontation with America. Prior to them, he was a child—what manner of child, nurtured and spoiled in the Richmond mansion of the Allans, his words reveal. And after them, there come the open pages of his books, of his trafficking with editors, of his relations with Mrs. Clemm and with his wife, Virginia. These letters form the link that makes the whole. Their appearance is a major event in American letters.

The career of Poe becomes a scene in a symbolic drama. He is creative will, nakedly let loose upon the American world. Who shall say America did not summon him? He rises like an impulse from this land which cannot act him out. Between America and Poe, as between Poe and his foster-father, are the chains of a need unrecognized. Without his adopted son whom he bred to hyperæsthesia and left to starve, whom he set high and then cast down, John Allan would be a clod. And without John Allan, Poe would have been altogether disembodied. In the tortuous recriminations of these letters, there is the plea for love as well as bread. Transpose the family quarrel into general terms, and you have the full years of Poe: Poe, the most highly potential intellect of a land whose hour of realization had not struck.

In this failure, there is no object lesson, no call for a morality. It is too inevitable and too right. It is true, that with the intellectual range of a Goethe Poe gave forth but a few shrivelled and glittering pages. And yet, in his hour and for his hour he gave the ultimate, since he gave a Symbol. An imagined Poe, petted to old age in the rich library of an adoring foster-father, would have been less—far less than the frail, fierce, frustrate Poe we have.

Unarmed, unguided, he went forth to create in the American desert. His masterful will found no immediate object upon which to work. He had absorbed haphazard the philosophers, the metaphysical poets, the occultists and

* Edgar Allan Poe Letters Till Now Unpublished, in the Valentine Museum at Richmond, Va.; with introductory essay and commentary by Mary Newton Stanard: First Limited Edition: Philadelphia. J. B. Lippincott Co. $15.

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seers of the Kabbala, the chroniclers of exotic journeys. But he did not stay in *their* world. His constant effort was to refocus and apply this chaos of ideas to some specific experience of life. Witness his absolute treatment of the values of poetry and music: his making metaphysics out of the relation of facts or out of the forecast of facts: his use of the machine, of air-ships, of mesmerism, of physiology and mechanical contrivance, to express the widening consciousness of the human soul. Even the wanderings of Arthur Gordon Pym end in a revelation. Of course Poe failed. Grub Street in Baltimore and New York—this remained the stage for his Apocalypse. And the hazard crumbs from the intellectual banquets of Asia and of Europe were but manna, in no wise transfiguring the Wilderness which for forty years he wandered.

Yet the lofty impulse of his work is lodged, forever. Poe's theory of pure poetry holds the intuition of a great æsthetic. His Eureka gives the glimpse of a vision deep as that which is imagined in the Kalpa and the Brahma of the Hindus. A half dozen of his tales, Eleanora, Ligeia, Morella, The Fall of the House of Usher, etc., are variants of a single theme which envisions the mystery of the Person as close as any prophecy of Blake. Hard, shut, shrunken work it is: and yet it holds a vaster sense of life than the amplitudes of Whitman and of Melville. Holds it, however, as a seed the tree. In Whitman and Melville there is life's blossoming. Poe belongs less with the creators of art than with its prophets.

His creative impulse, first to last, was metaphysical and religious. Behind these horrid trips to Ulalume and Usher, these dogmatic repetitions of tell-tale hearts and reincarnate lovers, is the man's will for a world timeless and absolute. That his materials were the shoddy "seconds" of the romantic Gothic, we may leave to the pedants to assure us. Poe's impulse was no more romantic than was Goethe's. He had a flair of the Real: he lacked the power to establish this reality from the world about him. Hence, his defeated flights to other realms. But in his Poetics and in Eureka, it stands proved that the glancings-off which constitute his "works" were but his trial flights: that Poe was resolved to found his revelation within the visible, audible, beating world. Unlike the Bostonians, Poe was no transcendentalist by choice or reason. The confrontation of experience and then the act of alchemy upon it, by virtue of his vision, was beyond his powers. And was beyond him not, as seemed manifest, because of his harried and brief life: was beyond him symbolically, inevitably, since it was beyond the America of which he was so high, so near, so unachieved an impulse.

Let us make *this* Poe ours. Let us not twang semi-sentimental plaints about his failures. Let us not fool ourselves as to his triumphs. Let us not blame the symbolical Mr. Allan for acting so well his ungrateful rôle in a Scene so vastly without his canny ken. Let us, above all, not split Poe—as is the fashion of the day—into pseudo-scientific fragments of psychologic and sociologic terms. Let us take him whole—the man and his work: Poe the embodied impulse of an Organism which holds not only him, but us; Poe the impulse of America to transfigure the worlds within it into a world more real. And let us proceed to the Adventure.

WALDO FRANK.

An Ice Man Remembers

[*Time: 1960. Place: The home of Harold ("Red") Grange in a western city. There is a stuffed football over the mantelpiece.*]

REPORTER—Mr. Grange, I want to include you in the series on Great Figures of the Past I am writing up for the McWhee Syndicate.

Mr. Grange—Go ahead, go as far as you like. Ask me anything.

Reporter—Thank you. Now, you see, a new generation is growing up who don't remember those days, the grand old football days, I mean, and they ought to know the facts about something they just missed.

Mr. Grange—Those were the days.

Reporter—Now, I've been digging around in the morgue some and there's a pretty interesting morgue on you personally that I'd just like to check up on a little.

Mr. Grange—What do you mean, a morgue?

Reporter—It is the place in a newspaper office where they collect in all the clippings on a certain man and keep them there. Now, in one of those clippings it tells how, right after the first game in New York 'way back in 1925, you made a talk over the radio, broadcasting it was, and you said the spiritual rewards of the game were a lot bigger and better than the material ones, or something like that to the same effect.

Mr. Grange—Spiritual? Wait a minute . . . Spiritual . . . Oh, yes, I remember! But between you and I some other fellow must of wrote that up and I spoke it for the radio. I just spoke it, that's all.

Reporter—I won't mention that. If you said it you meant it, no matter who thought it up. Now, what did you mean? Can't you elaborate that sentiment?

Mr. Grange—I suppose I meant something like what I said. Fix it up to suit yourself.

Reporter—Leave it to me. Here's another point: there was a check they gave you for a thousand dollars for your name for some tobacco or cigarette, and it came out at the same time that you never smoked.

Mr. Grange—A check for one thousand? No, I don't have any recollection of that transaction. I never smoked in my life. The tobacco people must of known that.

Reporter—One more thing: You said—this was also in 1925—that you aimed to make just one million dollars and then you would go back to your home town and become a prominent citizen and ride around in your car.

Mr. Grange—Two cars it was, two cars. And before you go I want to show you my new straight-twelve. Some car. But now, about that million: I always said the first million was the hardest, and it was. I didn't figure for a while, because I only read the headlines about myself, that a million gross was only half a million net, because my manager Pyle and I we went fifty-fifty on all takings. So, after the season was over, when I played thirty times in eighteen states, and before doing that athletic film, I took on a few commercial propositions. There was a Red Grange vacuum cleaner, and a Red Grange hat, and a couple of garter companies, and a new style collar and a chocolate sponge nut bar, the Red Grange Mouthful, and

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maybe three or four other little industrial items. Anyway, I was pretty near that million when I was told about income tax, which was some surprise and looked as big as a twenty-five yard penalty. So I got busy and went in on vaudeville all summer, doing an act where I was tackled just across the goal line after a long run off stage. There was a girl in it, too, and a lot of chorus men for the cheering section, and it went over big. The coon coats alone cost about seventeen hundred dollars.

Reporter—Did you marry the girl?

Mr. Grange—No, and I'll tell you about that since you insist. Out on the coast when I was doing that film and met a lot of movie queens of course but there was a girl there she was the daughter of a prominent football trainer and the only woman I ever met knew the difference between a skin tackle play and the other kind, so we got married.

Reporter—Now, just tell me a little something more about that movie film you were in.

Mr. Grange—Well, I was signed up for three hundred thousand dollars advance on percentage and they said they never saw a fellow who screened so well, and they were going to call it First Down Dearie, but they changed that to The Big Kick, which finally in the end they named it Touchdown Red and it was all about a college football player who can't make more than two yards at a time except he sees his sweetie in the grandstand with some other rival fellow and then he blows the lid off and the score is 77—0. But they changed that afterwards to a real close score. Anyway, I had a terrible time what with those California movie supers always off-side and forward passing into the ground but what could you expect for ten dollars a day and what with the fact that my nose got busted and they had to hold up the love scenes and it cost them one thousand bucks to have a big eye, ear and nose specialist come over from Los Angeles every day for three weeks.

Reporter—What is the most exciting play you remember?

Mr. Grange—Well, there's one play that I keep thinking about time and again. It was on November 3rd, 1926, in the St. Louis Stadium against the Missouri Imperials in the last quarter with the score 16—13 against us on the twenty-yard line. Winkler, our quarter-back, gave the signal for a zone forward by me and just before the ball was snapped back, Wally Buck you remember him said to me It's raining and that set me thinking so that I threw the ball to the wrong zone for an incompleted which cost us the game because on the next play their end tripped over himself and left a hole a mile wide open through which I would of taken the ball for the winning score on the next play. Yes sir.

Reporter—Are you interested in politics, Mr. Grange?

Mr. Grange—Not exactly. Senator Auerbach down the street could tell you a lot about them if you want. You know he used to be the famous end, Shoestring Auerbach. But for two years I was president of the University of Illinois's Alumni Association, if that's what you mean.

Reporter—How's your weight?

Mr. Grange—At that time it was 172. Then I lost 2½ pounds. The next year I was up to 180. In 1942 I got down to 168 for a couple of days. Now I'm somewhere around 235.

Reporter—Won't you recall some of the features of those early days.

Mr. Grange—It wasn't all straight sailing by a darn sight. They all panned me for turning pro. Then we lost a lot of games, and I got tired and didn't play good and the crowd handed me raspberries and I couldn't go through with all my schedule, calling on governors and getting the freedom of cities and that kind of stuff. Besides, I was getting hurt all the time and might of got hurt worse any time. But I made that million and only the next year they up and passed this National Injurious Sports Act. And then good-by football.

Reporter—Will you let me have your photo, Mr. Grange?

Mr. Grange—Here's a couple of stills as they used to say in the old movie game. I'll autograph one. I've done a lot of autographing in my time, kids' footballs and albums and what not. You know one year seventy-six ice-men came to ask my advice about how to improve their finances. They were good boys, and I gave them good advice.

Reporter—You've got a nice house here, a dandy.

Mr. Grange—It cost us a lot of money. Now come with me while I show you a thing or two. This dining-room now has six thousand six hundred cubic feet of air space, which is unusual in a dining-room of this size. Here's where we plan an additional wing for next year with a sun parlor and a gym, maybe, for the kids—my son's kids that is. What do you think of this bathroom? Right up to date. Along in here is the kitchen. Here's the point: everything is electrical, like it is all over town nowadays, except one thing. I won't have an electric refrigerator. Good old ice for me. I pile it in the ice box myself every day, just for old times. You know I used to be an ice man before I played football and went to school. I got my first job from an ice distributor who bet me five dollars I couldn't shoulder a 300-pound cake. But I did, and that's how it all began.

Reporter—Don't you ever regret those fine old sporting days?

Mr. Grange—Well, I'll tell you. I'll tell you now what I told them then at the time: I liked football all right, but I didn't like it well enough to play it for nothing.

ROBERT LITTELL.

The Lady Who is Chaste

This lady who is chaste will never sicken
Of chastity—I think she likes it well,
But of a pale fear hypothetical,
Knowing that should the blood beat in her quicken,
The blue vein burn to red, the clear eye thicken,
She could not take this passion or repell,
But fixed by judging eyes invisible,
Must freeze there in their gaze, like Lot's wife stricken.

This haunts her much, and though her heart is cold,
Her pride strikes in it with a fretful heat;
Timid and cool, she plays at being bold,
Leans into moonlight, listens for the sweet
Phrases of lovers, hoping to shake free
Of hated fear in hated ecstasy!

FRANK ERNEST HILL.

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CORRESPONDENCE

In Defense of Mr. Cummings

SIR: The New Republic has too many feathers in its cap for recognition of what is genuine in the newer poetry to spoil its reputation as a critic. Such a review as The Romance of Actuality by Walter Kohn ("a young Chicago writer" according to the apology for authors at the back of the magazine)—such a review is startling in a paper where Robert Frost was first enthusiastically hailed in America. Mr. E. E. Cummings, the erratic and vivid author of XLI Poems, has a right to more mature judgment than has been accorded him in your issue of December 2.

If the reviewer knows that conceits in English poetry date at least as far back as the early sixteenth century; that Puttenham in The Art of English Poesy, 1589, recommended methods as artificial as Cummings has used in his present volume; that George Herbert did something very like it with a different stroke—if he knows this he will hardly call the expression of Cummings's intense interest in form wholly experimental in English verse. He has only to glance at modern European literature for suggestions of all the innovations of Cummings, from the crescendo and diminuendo of Hugo's Les Djinns and Espronceda's Estudiante to the very devices Mr. Kohn praises (especially in Cummings's opening poem) in the work of Charles Nodier. In a description of Nodier's conceits by Brandes one finds the example for all Cummings's peculiarities. "At his command the letters become so long that they stretch from top to bottom of the page; he commands again and they dwindle into the tiniest of the tiny; he screams and they stand up on end in terror; he becomes melancholy and they hang their heads all along the lines . . . sometimes they stand on their heads so that we have to turn the book upside down to read them; sometimes they follow the narrative so closely that a descent of the stairs is printed thus

'Hereupon
our
hero
went
dejectedly
down
the
stairs.'

Imitation is here not without improvement, however. Nodier is outdone by Cummings in such lines as:

pho
nographisrunn
ingd o w, n ponograph
stopS.

While Mr. Kohn speaks always of Mr. Cummings's tricks as experiments, he is evidently not unaware that the work is imitative, for he speaks of the Proustian effects and "essentially decadent revolutionary technique" with which he has enriched English poetry.

After quoting a coffee house description whose vividness depends on bold humor, Mr. Kohn says, "It is noteworthy, however, that the effect of actuality is obtained only by vitiating orthodox sentence structure and creating a kaleidoscopic entity in which each atomic unit is a bold daub of color." What a lovely sentence—if it were true! This statement surprised me so much that I read the lines aloud, not overemphasizing the line cadences as printed, and found that my hearers, quite unconscious of the vitiated orthodoxy of the sentence structure on the page, felt the sharp punch of the description as keenly as I had done. Certainly the idea of breaking sentences into atoms and re-arranging these in new combinations with new relative values is interesting. It would be more intriguing, however, if all words had color and life apart from the ideas they help to express. Is it possible to separate words from their families, divorce them from their affinities—even to amputate their arms and legs—and have them retain power to express actualities? If so, E. E. Cummings has used a form which may be useful to others interested in being different.

The reviewer praises Cummings for adaptation of the sonnet to house his expression, saying that, "new material retains its vigor only as it escapes incarceration in old forms and formalization into new ones." True, but how walk more surely into these traps of form than by thinking always of avoiding them? When the young writer almost apologizes for the use of the sonnet, or what approaches it, one is amused; for one thinks of those now living who have really escaped incarceration in form because they have been willing to accept it as the proven vehicle of vision—Masefield in the rime royal, Frost in blank verse, Edna Millay in the sonnet.

And, after all, Mr. Cummings's form is not the point which at this stage of his career needs attention. He amazed us in his first publications; that temporary excitement over, his efforts to gain publicity understood and overlooked, what of his singing? That he does in Sonnet II spill his "bright incalculable soul," that in one of his portraits he has drawn Achilles in a "thunderbolt red-hot," that his love song ending—

rarely-beloved
a single star is
uttered and i
think
of you

—that this song has the essential beauty of Elizabethan lyrics without a shred of their conventionality—these are the facts that matter in XLI Poems.

Mr. Kohn writes interestingly; he has shown elsewhere that he can "unbend cold silences with song." But as yet his critical opinions are less valuable than his outbursts of lyric faith.

ALICE BIDWELL WESENBERG.

Indianapolis, Ind.

A Correction

SIR: In my article in the New Republic of December 23 entitled A Light Unto the Jew, there are several misprints one of which is so serious that I feel called upon to ask you to rectify it. In the sentence, "I look upon the Menorah as the most promising activity in the United States," the word "Jewish" has been omitted. The sentence should read, "I look upon the Menorah as the most promising Jewish activity in the United States."

WALDO FRANK.

New York, N. Y.

Charles S. Pierce

SIR: May I take the liberty to use your columns to procure such original letters, monographs, articles by and from Charles S. Pierce (1839-1914) the American logician, a biography of whom I am preparing?

All communications may be sent to the undersigned, care of P. O. Box 24, New York University, University Heights, New York City.

A. HENRY SCHNEER.

New York, N. Y.

A Group of Intellectuals

SIR: The following communication may be of interest to your readers:

A group of the "intellectually adult" meet once a week for the purpose of airing viewpoints, opinions and prejudices. This group, calling themselves the GROUP, has no mission—or ax to grind.

It invites intelligent adults, who are interested in ideas, literature and art to come and air their views—in a sort of clearing house of opinions. Individuals who are interested should communicate with the secretary:

SEYMOUR A. SELIGSON,

37 East 22nd St., New York City.

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Miss Mayne's Enchanters

Byron, by Ethel Colburn Mayne. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 474 pages. $5.

Enchanters of Men, by Ethel Colburn Mayne. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 358 pages. $5.

"ONE must be a philosopher to appreciate her fully," Miss Mayne quotes in the Ninon de Lenclos. "No writer could render such a character," and adds "what adulation is implicit in all this! It is at the risk almost of life that one may criticize her, or presume to think that one understands her. The truth is that here we have another proof of male arrogance. Every one of these reverential gazers is a man—and it is amusing to find, as we read, that all that was admirable in her was attributed in her own day to that famous declaration of hers: 'I saw, as soon as I began to reflect, that our sex has been burdened with all that is frivolous, and that men have reserved to themselves the right to the essential things and qualities. From that moment I resolved to make myself a man.'"

If I had known those lines in my innocence of ten years ago when I read the Byron, I should have been less puzzled. That book seemed to me then to have been written sometimes by the devil. Some way or other I found when I had finished it that I had been supplied with things about Byron that quite did him up in a shuck, as they say in the West. His by-play and pose, his attitudes and stage effects, took on a kind of domestic outline with all the dear domestic clarity; if Byron gained a pound we seemed to gain an inch on that superbly entrenched position of his; if he slipped into some dubious shadiness now and then, abroad or with women and their affairs, we got the matter very clearly set forth. A fine gentleman comes early to call on the bard and finds him sitting up in bed in curl papers; those famous locks were not curly at all, then, for all their tempestuous fame! It was not that these details should have been suppressed; nobody wants a fake deity on a sugar pedestal. It was only that they appeared somehow with such neat penetration, grew so enlightening, as if to say that a woman biographer was not losing her head just because she was a woman. And what a part of the Byronic irony it was, after all, that his best biography should be written by a woman!

I should have had a better lead on the Byron if I had known this Enchanters of Men. I look now at the gallery of heads that adorn the essays. There exist portraits of these ladies, by men painters doubtless, in which they are as lovely as their adorers declared them to be. But in the book almost every picture has beneath it the label "From an Old Print" and is joyously homely, as often as not a fright, however much the male moths may have fluttered around it once, destroying, wasting, twisting life, making it violent, beautiful, romantic, puerile, as the case might be. And to confirm the assurances of the old prints how often does Miss Mayne assure us that this lady or that was not really beautiful at all, almost plain in fact, but only well studied in charm and fascination for the male! Du Barry, with the empty head, is allowed her beauty, and here and there another lady, but not many. The fault, it seems, was not in these stars but in themselves that men were love-sick underlings.

The Byron is now republished in a form shortened and revised from that of 1912. The little scratches are there still in that divine and romantic patin. But the work holds its own. Byron is finely accounted for, and no harm is done. In this new form there are revaluations, reconsidered judgments in the light of new evidence, revised positions on the Byron-Leigh problem, on the last journey to Greece, on the character of Trelawney and other Byron issues. The account has its faults, its simplicities of taste, but it is admirable and entertaining nevertheless. The scope of Byron's genius is caught; there is an impressive record of his power, his inconsistencies, his various course through such events and qualities as made his name a rumor over the world and his figure and personality the common knowledge of Europe.

Enchanters of Men is a reprint also. It is less scholarly and ambitious than the earlier work, it omits any pretense of biographies and origins and rests its attractions on its range and suggestiveness. This list of women, twenty-three in all, falls into groups, the Royal Mistress, the Courtesan, the Royal Lady, the Star, the Egeria. In it we run from Jenny Lind, Grisi, Taglioni to Balzac's Evelina Hanska and Heine's Mathilde, from Teresa Guiccioli to Du Barry, Tullia D'Aragona, Marie Mancini, Lola Montez, Diane de Poitiers, Gabrielle d'Estrées. Their biographer thinks of them all and of her book of them as a study in Feminine Magic, since each woman was after a fashion an enchanter of men. She leaves her volume as a fresh testimony, or a flat denial, to the time-honored transparency, commonsense and stability of the Male. These, as she says, are fair, frail, fascinating—and foreign ladies.

The accounts themselves are violently unequal in style, in treatment. Some of them, like the Lola Montez, are born seemingly of contempt from one member of the sex to another and are clipped off short without any gratification of our natural curiosity as to the exact outcome of events, and —what is a graver objection—without that recognition, in such a being as this Lola Montez, for example, of an endowment in elemental qualities that can be observed and admired for themselves as we admire sounds, storms, light or color. The study of La Guiccioli in her relations with Byron makes her out a great fool and Byron something of a cad and ass, despite Miss Mayne's acquaintance with Byron's habit of mocking speech and dandyish bravura when he wished to release but also to cover his feelings, and despite that incomparable letter written in Teresa's garden once to her. This Italian lady, it appears, should not have let herself be put in such a position as she was with a man, even though it made her happy. So we go.

The most delightful of these little histories, like the Gabrielle d'Estrées, the Marie Mancini, Diane, Tullia, are beautifully placed, the theme stamped on each unerringly. "This," the writer says at the start of the Gabrielle, "is one of those love stories always most attractive to posterity—where the personal magnetism of the man concerned is all—or nearly all. Of Gabrielle d'Estrées the supreme distinction is that Henry of Navarre adored her." There is Marie Mancini: "Fascinating, generous-hearted, restless creature, immortalized — how characteristically — by a goodbye!" Tullia D'Aragona, one of those fanatics of the soul and the intellect whom we call the Platonist women of the Renaissance, about whom floats the aroma of a sort of divine silliness; one also of the most famous of Italian poetesses, a woman with eyes that the early love poets called "ardente stelle," and that we moderns call "fatal," a courtesan whose Book on Platonic love had a wide and excellent influence.

And whether it is by her own interest and reflection or by the spring that she got from the French sources, from that incurable and lively logic, that search for the immortal phrase and the felicitous and plausible analysis of character and motive, that these French biographers exhibit, their devotion to scandal and sentiment, to atmosphere, to fatal-

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ity, bravura and glory, I have no way of knowing, but I do know that Miss Mayne writes best when the subject is French. Her Diane de Poitiers, Gabrielle d'Estrées, Du Barry and Ninon de Lenclos, are the volume's masterpieces. They crackle with brilliant quotation, they have their own charm and pungency and their narrative, and even poetic, eloquence. From these especially, and often elsewhere in the book, emerge strangely moving forces that take hold of the imagination; and, separating themselves from the personage and the event, give us the sense of passionate, shattering life and of wit and the world suddenly made to reveal the powers and dreams behind, underneath and around—somewhat as it was when Ninon played on her lute and the startled company seemed to hear there "all her mind, and all her soul."

STARK YOUNG.

Afro-American Concord

On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs, by Dorothy Scarborough. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 289 pages. $3.50.

The Book of American Negro Spirituals, edited with an introduction by James Weldon Johnson. Musical arrangements by J. Rosamund Johnson. Additional numbers by Lawrence Brown. New York: The Viking Press. 187 pages. $3.50.

Mellows, by R. Emmet Kennedy. New York: Albert and Charles Boni. 183 pages. $5.

DOROTHY SCARBOROUGH'S captivating book, which presents only the secular music of the Negro, justly counterbalances Mr. Johnson's excellent anthology of spirituals, and Mellows, the euphoniously-titled volume by R. Emmet Kennedy. Although Mr. Kennedy brings forward examples of both sacred and unsanctified song, pious tunes far outnumber the profane.

Ten years ago Dr. Scarborough was made president of the Texas Folk-lore Association. She had detected an abundance of musical game native to the South, as yet uncaught, and with the intention to serve it up to Folk-lore Association audiences, set out on the trail amiably armed with notebook, pencil, and recording phonograph. Elusive prey, these ballads, reels, game-songs work-songs of the Negro! Dr. Scarborough confesses:

> I loafed on back-steps, I hung guilefully over garden fences, I broiled myself beside cookstoves, and ironing-boards, I stifled in dust on cleaning days—asking only that I might hear the songs the workers sang.

Sympathy brought down the quarry she hunted, and her book presents the amazing mass of material collected with deeply-felt appreciation of its singular and racy beauty. A Texan by birth, Dorothy Scarborough was already an adept amateur collector of Negro folk-songs before she turned professional. From the standpoint of familiar acquaintance with the Negro, and again from a position of scholarly detachment, she makes a doubly sure approach to her subject. The melodies assembled are given unharmonized, but one hopes that some of these bright threads of tune will be woven into an appropriate fabric of instrumentation and find their place on concert programs along with the better-known religious music of the Negro.

A valuable chapter tells of the colored man's part in passing on the traditional ballads and songs which were brought to the South by Cavalier and Scotch settlers. Hangman, Slack On the Line is a kitchen variant of the parlor ballad, The Hangman's Tree. Dr. Scarborough has mined deeply in a vein of folk-lore for the division of her book devoted to work-songs, those incomparable land chanteys sung to the rhythm of swinging pick and hammer. Among the highly savored love songs are several versions of Frankie and Albert.

> Frankie and Albert were lovers.
> Oh, lordy, how they did love!
> Said they'd be true to each other,
> True as the bright stars above.
> He was her man, but he done her wrong.

Music hall popularity promises soon to rank Frankie, whose "blue-barrel forty-one" disposed of Albert, with the immortal Fricka and other avenging spouses of dramatic song.

To the specialist this book commends itself as a document of permanent authority. Other readers will value the volume as highly for its musical and poetical substance, for the humor and enthusiasm of Dr. Scarborough's comments, and for the charmed style in which she relates her quest.

James Weldon Johnson claims for the religious music of the Negro a miracle of birth. In an estimable preface to The Book of American Negro Spirituals he asserts, with the emotionally persuasive conviction of a Fundamentalist, that the spiritual is of immaculate African origin. Like most believers in a miracle, he shows a minimum of tolerance toward those who ask for proof of the mystery. Doubters are referred to H. E. Krehbiel's Afro-American Folk-songs. Mr. Johnson dismisses as unsound and prejudiced the conclusions of other critics who maintain that a leafage of European folk-song and the American revival hymn may be detected on the spiritual's genealogical tree.

Many of the songs in Mr. Johnson's collection will persuade even the sceptical that certain melodies and rhythms are of African inception. There is a melodic bend as unmistakable as a line of racial physiognomy, and in the rhythm, with its vagaries of verbal accent—the syllable which cannot wait for the stressed beat in the music—is heard a syncopated racial pulse. But where are the "bizarre" and "anarchic" harmonies which Mr. Johnson declares are as typical of Negro music as rhythmic current and melodic shape? The prevailing chords are tonic, dominant and subdominant, those staples of European harmony which are not a commodity of native African music.

The spiritual's title to miraculous birth may be briefly summarized from Mr. Johnson's argument. Music, as known to the primitive African, was only a chant or cry rhythmically emphasized by tom-tom or drum. Sold into slavery, the black man was converted to Christianity, and as he grew in grace his musical equipment increased. His barbaric wail was transformed by piety into the spiritual. Some of the songs, Mr. Johnson believes, were of communal origin, piecemeal compositions contributed by different members of a group under the influence of religious ecstasy. Others were the creation of single individuals, black troubadours whose rags of slavery were overlaid by a shining panoply of righteousness.

"Make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob!" The congregation of believers obeys this mandate of the psalmist by a rising thrust of melody, We Am Climbin' Jacob's Ladder; the song mounts an octave and "the soldiers of the cross" ascend on rungs of praise to a peak of delirious rapture. Apart from the music, the text of the spirituals may be read with delight in many lines which are jeweled by naïve poetical paraphrase of Scriptural lore.

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Up to de walls ob Jericho
He marched with spear in han',
"Go blow dem ram horns," Joshua cried,
"Kase de battle am in my han'."

Den the lam' ram sheep horns begin to blow,
Trumpets begin to soun',
Joshua commanded de chillen to shout,
An' de walls come tumblin' down.

Among the sixty-one spirituals, arranged for solo voice with piano accompaniment by Rosamond Johnson and Lawrence Brown, there are a few which employ a sophisticated piano idiom disagreeing with the primitive tune and poesy. One of the best songs in The Book of American Negro Spirituals is Joshua Fit de Battle ob Jericho. Here the melody is supported by simple vigorous chords and an imaginative ear can easily catch the effect of the original version in unaccompanied vocal harmony. Whether or not the Negro spiritual partly derives from the banal gospel song of white revivalists is a question for musical critics. While they quibble over the seeds from which it grew, music lovers will feast upon the fruit, a unique hymnology of richly flavored beauty.

In a foreword to Mellows, R. Emmet Kennedy explains his book's arresting title. Mellow means melody in the Negro dialect of Southern Louisiana, and is the name which the colored man uses to designate his devotional songs. The vernacularism pleases by its unintentional fitness. What better term of description could be found for music ripened through successive generations, for vocal utterance as natural and luscious as the yield of fertile loam?

Mr. Kennedy's childhood was spent in Louisiana. He has limited his search for Afro-American music to a section of country familiar and beloved. For scholarly comment upon the musical gleanings introduced in Mellows, he substitutes informal personal narrative and reminiscence. With glamorous strokes he portrays New Orleans, and into the picture steps a procession of dusky street vendors who sing their wares—the clothes-pole man, the blackberry woman, a chanting chimney-sweeper, a man chromatically wailing, "buttermilk, buttermilk."

Mr. Kennedy has provided four folk-songs and twenty-three spirituals with piano accompaniments in which he achieves a masterly consonance of instrumental suitability and effectiveness. Illustrations in black and white by Simmons Persons add to the text and music a piquant tang of pathos and grotesquery.

JANET RAMSAY.

Here's a Pretty Mess

The Case of Bituminous Coal, by Walton H. Hamilton and Helen R. Wright. New York: The Macmillan Co. 307 pages. $2.50.

ANYONE can read this book in two or three hours, and though it is not all as funny as the quotations from W. S. Gilbert which head the chapters, it is darkly amusing, and does present by far the best diagnosis of this sick industry that is available. No prescription is made—that will come later, but the analysis by these experts of the Institute of Economics shows clearly that the remedies now officially favored are mere quackeries and can only prolong the fevered fantasies of the patient.

In order to set a standard by which the performance of the industry may be judged, the authors state the benefits which old economic texts assure us flow from competition. They then match the behavior of bituminous coal against the standard and find a failure in almost every item. Though competition does not obtain in quite theoretical purity in the soft coal fields, it is obvious that as complete competition as may be achieved would not solve the problem. Here is a case in which the facts, inductively analysed, completely negate the deductive theory. We may briefly summarize the discrepancy between "economic law" and observed fact as follows:

1. Law—*Competition leads to a non-wasteful adjustment between capacity and demand, through the operation of price.*
   Fact—Capacity of mines has for twenty-five years been from a third to a half greater than coal produced, and has been growing faster than production. Capacity has increased with no relationship to price.
2. Law—*Excess of capacity leads to efficient practices, through survival of the more efficient, low-cost units.*
   Fact—Soft coal mining, though one of the most competitive, is one of the most backward industries technically, and the more efficient do not drive the less efficient permanently out of the industry.
3. Law—*Competition leads to a uniform price to the consumer for a given quality—with minor variations due to location, etc.*
   Fact—Prices vary widely among consumers and with little regard to qualities.
4. Law—*Competition tends to reduce prices to cost of production, and keeps prices steady through their interaction with demand and supply.*
   Fact—From 1915 to 1920 coal prices rose more than general wholesale prices and from 1920 to 1924 fell less, regardless of costs of production. Prices change violently in short periods. Price changes do not adjust demand and supply.
5. Law—*Competition tends to equalize wage-earners' conditions in a given industry with those in other industries, and to reward the more efficient workers according to efficiency.*
   Fact—Miners have conditions sometimes as good, but often much worse than those in other industries, whether measured in earnings, employment, safety, housing or what-not. There is little sign of wages varying according to efficiency whether in union or non-union fields.

Unreasonable as all this sounds, it can hardly be controverted, and the authors point out convincingly why it happens.

It has long been argued, even by spokesmen of the union, that competition would remedy the evils of the industry. This argument has recently received emphasis on account of the rapid development of more efficient technique and machinery. But the authors do not see that the sudden access of technique does anything but emphasize the economic maladjustments of the past—beneficial though it may prove in some indefinite future. Automatic machinery reduces labor costs and increases overhead. As long as operation is steady, profit is greater on account of the reduction of labor cost, but when operation is interrupted profit vanishes and the overhead burden goes on, perhaps crushingly. If a few operators install the machinery and the rest do not, they may undersell others and keep going steadily. But there is no guarantee that the use of machinery will not

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spread throughout the industry. And the total effect of the better methods is greatly to increase an already over-developed capacity. Experience shows that the market for coal does not increase in proportion to increased capacity or lower costs. The same old story is likely to be repeated. When a flooded market brings price below the cost even of the more efficient, mechanized producers, they may be the first to tumble because of their greater burden of overhead. All this bodes distress for the operators, misery for the miners, ruin for the union, and waste and loss for the public.

We await anxiously the promised volume on a solution.

GEORGE SOULE.

Honey Out of the Rock

Honey Out of the Rock, by Babette Deutsch. New York: D. Appleton and Company. 129 pages. $1.50.

THOUGH Babette Deutsch's second volume reveals a greatly enlarged store of technical knowledge, or, possibly, just because of that, Honey Out of the Rock is far too self-conscious in expression to contain much of the rich warm emotional essence its title would suggest. The predominating feature of the book is its coldness. And not in the sense that many people misapply the term to so-called intellectual verse. Of skilfully painted snow or steel, may be born a fiery æsthetic ardor.

Miss Deutsch's poetry, however, is neither difficult nor obscure, and her words are connotatively sensuous and emotional. But they are merely words. Beneath the rouge and extravagant wardrobe of her vividly colorful vocabulary and wide variety of metrical arrangements, the pulse and running blood of an actual feeling is rarely detectible. And then but feebly.

The whole volume, in brief, contains in its pages little that seems uniquely and genuinely Miss Deutsch; and that little is represented by an occasional line here and there instead of by any two or three entire poems, so that what one gathers of her personality is like the fitful fragrance a chance wind brings, rather than that we breathe in from a flower we may actually clutch and pluck. One is forced, therefore, to stress the imitative quality of her work, to lament the stubborn tugging at one's memory always for certain lines by someone else . . .

> Moss-green, fern-green, and leaf-and-meadow green

is H. D.'s method of observation; Rupert Brooke is recalled by

> Yes, I have loved
> Soft rugs, softer flowers,
> The silver and the cedar-wood. . . .
> I have loved. . . .

One's liking or distaste for Elinor Wylie is revived by the rhythm and images of

> Gold coins encrusted
> with bitter green;
> The spiced brown wrappings
> of mummied priests;
> Blind steel once trusted
> by a smarting queen;
> The solemn trappings
> of crusaders' beasts. . . .

And, in the same fashion, are brought to mind other poets as widely different even as T. S. Eliot and Edna Millay and D. H. Lawrence.

It would be possible, of course, for such a variety of influences to be fused and utterly transmuted by Miss Deutsch's own predominating individuality. That this will yet happen, that, when the days of her apprenticeship are over, all these sparking chips will result in one honey-giving rock, becomes more than an idle hope as one alights upon this excellent comment on her own work:

> Yet all this fiery gesturing is cold
> As the pale glass that is its unmoved bed.
> Fire cannot give the mirror warmth to hold. . . .
> Only the glamor lives, the heat is shed.

MARCIA NARDI.

Music in Literature

Piano Quintet, by Edward Sackville West. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

"YOU could spin endless variations out of five people traveling on the continent, even without the musical side. With it, we are irresistible . . . It gives a sort of third dimension to our interrelated lives."

Thus Melchior, most fantastic of the Piano Quintet, sums up their literary possibilities. His estimate is fair enough. And it was philanthropy for Mr. West to provide our enthusiasm with so neat a handle.

Although it deals with musicians, and is written in prelude, four movements and a coda, Piano Quintet is not blatantly musical. Like Lord Dunsany's Gods, it permits its quality to gleam through from behind as if by accident. To quote the analytical Melchior, once again, "We don't *talk* about our work much . . . only amateurs do that." But they do think in terms of music, so that sound is perceived as line, and vice versa. Their interactions are as closely braided as skilled orchestration. The pattern they weave is itself a melody. Not a set and orthodox tune, rounded to a close; but one which moves through a series of "moments" to an end that is not complete resolution.

Those who know Edward Sackville West through former work, are prepared for a style which leaps from the mot juste to the inspired phrase. Nor are they wholly surprised to find characters so individual and at the same time so true that they are in the nature of literary discoveries; Aurelian, with his eyes that open downward; his infinite compassion, his inconquerable aloofness; Melchior with his cherished mediaeval revery and his greed for insult; Barnaby, who realizes that he is only "sketched in for comic relief," and is man enough nevertheless to forego the Pagliaccio guffaw.

It is to the author's credit that he does not brush the bloom from his people by becoming over familiar with them. Like life, he is wise enough not to impose that strain; and unlike most authors, he is clever enough to strike a mean in his portraiture, between the slavish and the slovenly.

Because of all this, he has actually been able to reproduce in words the aura that surrounds the term "neurotic." And, equally rare, to write a first novel as valuable in fact as in promise; one which without thought of futures, lifts him well outside the swarm of those who chatter in print.

BETSY GREENEBAUM.

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Fiction Notes

Man of Strife, by Grove Wilson. New York: Frank-Maurice, Inc. $2.

HOW is it that a book may be good and yet unprofitable to the reader? Unprofitable not in the lack of instruction, but of joy and stimulation. Perhaps because there is a surfeit of good books. And we become callous to bare truths and bared lives simply through their endless recurrence. So with Mr. Wilson's book—full of fine thinking, true thinking and emotional intensity. Bruce Dalton, man of strife, struggles his way through pages alternately sordid, agonized, exalted and piteous. Environment and heredity play their crushing parts, painted with hard staccato phrases and words darkly dramatic. It is this headline sensationalism which often mars the beauty of the writing and makes it indigestible. There is no relief from the tone of deep, urgent feeling — no moments of clear repose. And then we have once more the dusty newspaper office—the life in Greenwich Village—and the War dragged in with its inevitable accompaniment of quickened tempo and word-piling. And we let the book drop with a feeling of admiration for the author and emptiness in oneself.

M. M.

The Swinging Caravan, by Achmed Abdullah. New York: Brentano's. $2.

THIS collection of "short stories" is a dazzling succession of scenic effects and a startling confusion of tongues rather than a literary creation. Mr. Abdullah's extraordinary fluency in lingual, racial and social catch phrases—a dragomanic gift of tongues—distracts attention from plots that against another background would seem creakingly artificial. But who can challenge verisimilitude of emotion and conduct—even "European" conduct—staged in Samarkand? Most of the stories are brilliantly plausible; all are spectacular; but to this reader only one—The Great Wife—went below the surface glitter to emotional verities. One wishes Mr. Abdullah would leave off startling the bourgeoisie and be content to touch them. D. B. W.

The Sailor's Return, by David Garnett. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.

MR. DAVID GARNETT'S newest story should restore to this accomplished fabulist the audience that Lady Into Fox immediately captured and that The Man in the Zoo may have failed entirely to retain. A British sea-captain of a hundred years ago introduces into the village public-house of which of which he has become landlord, the African princess whom he has interestingly married by barbaric rites; and their child. Ku-Kluxism develops. A story of this sort might be told "convincingly," but such is not Mr. Garnett's intention. Declining intimacy with his characters, he holds his situation at arm's length and subjects his material to a rigid stylization. Enveloping the severely simple outline that the fable thus assumes is one of those thoroughly uncomfortable Garnettian atmospheres that convey almost more than the actual items of the narrative. Mr. Garnett fascinates, as always, by his inappropriate air of staid and careful literalness, by being most formal and lucid when he is most preposterous. His delightfully artificial method has obvious kinship with Mrs. Wylie's, but it is less imaginative and one has the sense of fewer possibilities in reserve. O. H. D.

One Increasing Purpose, by A. S. M. Hutchinson. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. $2.

SIM PARIS got through the War without a scratch. He becomes convinced that he has been spared for a Purpose (always capitalized), later that "God is after him," and finally that his mission is to be an itinerant preacher of "K. O. H. kindness." Emotionally Mr. Hutchinson is a Puritan, but his mind lacks the hard logic of his spiritual forbears. "K. O. H." stands for Kingdom of Heaven, and the emphasis of Sim's teaching goes on respect for conventional religion; but mixed with subservience to the absolute is a sentimental humanitarianism which the true Puritan never entertained. The book is illogical. Only a reader already committed to Kiwanis Christianity will accept, on Mr. Hutchinson's premises, the conclusion of Sim's final sermon.

The only good things are occasional fine strokes in the portrayal of character. As in earlier novels, the style is a welter of bleating inversion, maudlin parenthesis, and imbecile repetition. H. S.

Quest, by Katharine Newlin Burt. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. $2.

THE movie field is, so far as we know, the only one not yet invaded by mysticism. Popular editions of revelation are on every newsstand and no romance is complete without one. Mrs. Burt's Quest is well presented by her highly-strung characters—all of whom would be the better for occasional relief from the emotional tension at which she keeps them. The book is well written and well constructed, but keyed to an emotional pitch that exhausts interest long before the Quest ends in the hero's discovery that God is Love. D. B. W.

Messrs. E. P. Dutton and Company have published an important study of the British Empire in Post War Britain by Andre Siegfried, professor in the Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques. This book was reviewed by Mr. R. H. Tawney in the New Republic for February 18, 1925.

Contributors

STUART CHASE, author of The Tragedy of Waste, is a member of the Labor Bureau of New York.

F. J. SCHLINK is a mechanical engineer-physicist, specializing in standardization and specification work, formerly technical assistant to the Director of the Bureau of Standards.

LOUIS UNTERMEYER has published this fall completely revised editions of Modern American Poetry and Modern British Poetry. He has also recently written a book of stories, The Fat of the Cat.

CHARLES MERZ has been a member of the editorial staff of the New Republic, Harper's Weekly and the New York World.

MARK VAN DOREN is a college instructor in English, and a contributor of poetry and criticism to various magazines.

JAMES OPPENHEIM is a poet and fiction-writer. He edited the short-lived Seven Arts. His chief work is The Sea, collecting five volumes of his poetry.

JANET RAMSAY is a musician and author of a novel, High Road, published in 1924.

MARCIA NARDI is a contributor of verse and criticism to the magazines.

BETSY GREENEBAUM is a graduate of the University of Chicago. She is at present a writer with the Fairchild Publications, New York.

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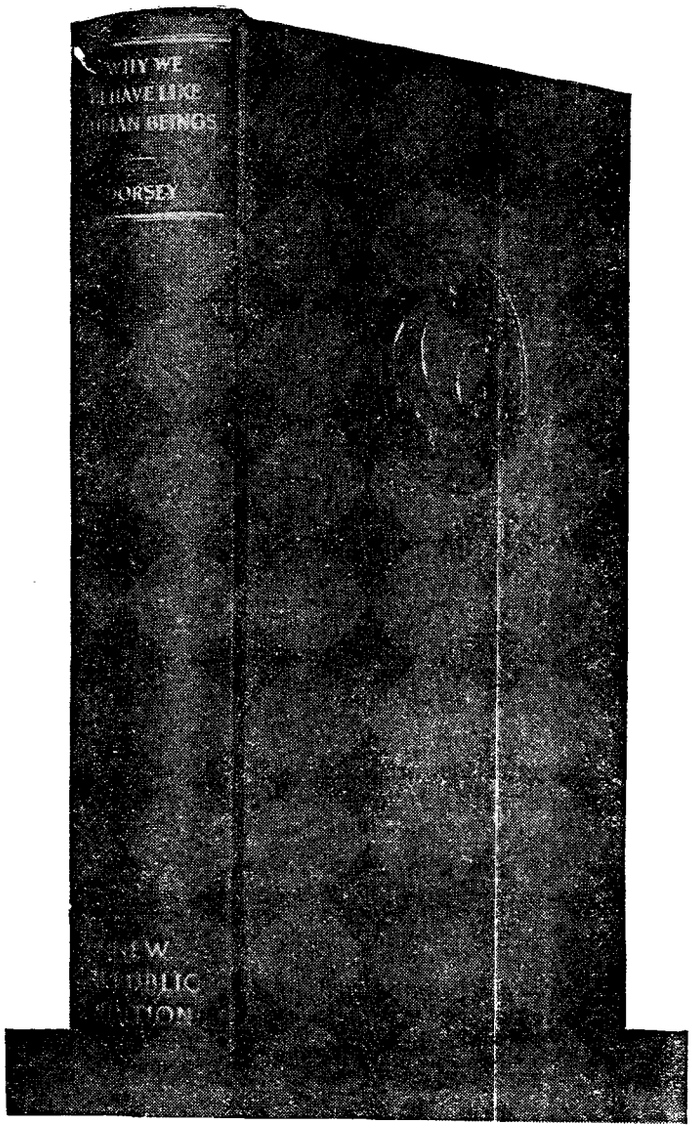

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I See By the Papers

that Heywood Broun is getting really wise to "that excellent new book," as he calls it—Why We Behave Like Human Beings, by George A. Dorsey. Ludie did his best the other day to fill the column, but collapsed about twenty yards from the finish. With his customary perspicacity Mr. Broun called on the learned doctor. The transition was a bit sudden, but the column was completed with a magnificent burst of speed. Dr. Dorsey is good for many more.*

Indeed, the great advantage of this author, as a space filler, is obvious once you give him a trial. You don't have to waste time digging around for quotable passages. You get back from one of those famous roof garden parties, where you have seen economists and judges and biologists and behaviorists for once behaving like human beings, pleasantly tired and unpleasantly concerned about the copy for this sacred page. What to do! Can do! You open the Dorsey. Anywhere. And grab.

If you hit upon a passage about eagles and wings and hands, you can tie it up in a jiffy with what you had already written. If Ludie is on your mind (Ludie is Mr. Broun's hookie-playing Airedale), and you happen to come upon something about the biologic significance of color, and the relative highness and lowness of Caucasians and Ethiopians, it is just as simple. Or, if you turn to The Endrocine Glands and the Causes of Death, you don't have to look for a tie-up at all. Just quote.

All of which is to say, as this page has said several times before, that Why We Behave Like Human Beings is about the most readable wisdom you are likely to come across. That is, the most easily absorbable. Wisdom, truly absorbed, makes for humanity. You will be a being more human than ever once you let Dr. Dorsey tell you why you behave like one already.

* Since the foregoing was written another Dorsey column has appeared, and the book has become for Mr. Broun, as it is rapidly becoming for many another, "the most interesting book he has read in a year."

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